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# 25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

JANUARY
2026

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## Welcome home *for* Christmas

SPARKLING DESIGN IDEAS TO
TRANSFORM EVERY SPACE

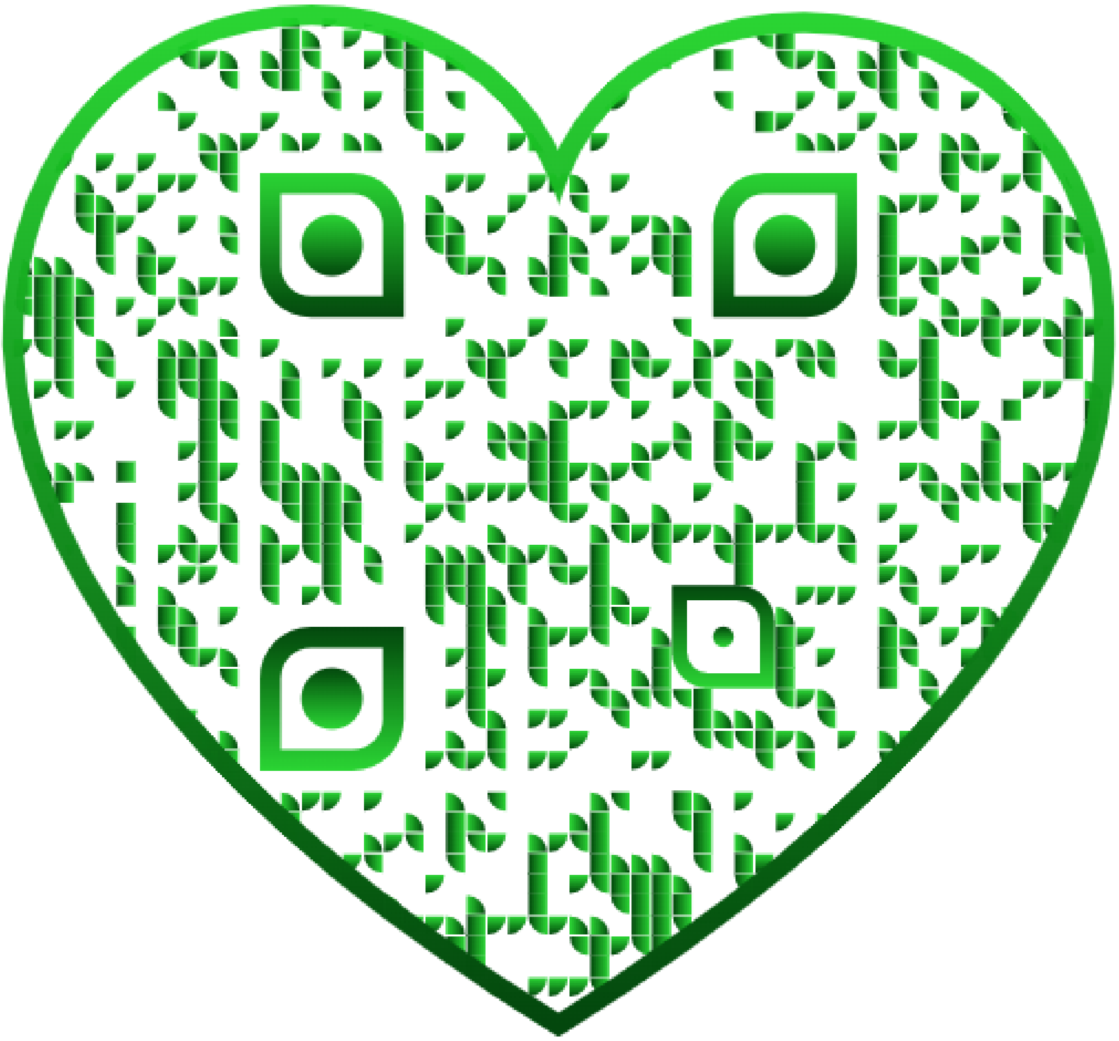
**IN THIS ISSUE**

- INSPIRING LIVING ROOMS
- STYLISH DINING AREAS
- VERSATILE KITCHENS
- UPDATED BEDROOMS

## Celebrate in festive style

CREATE STUNNING ROOMS READY FOR JOYFUL GATHERINGS

Converted barn | Regency country house | Victorian terrace | Alpine chalet | Fisherman's cottage



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# 25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

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## January 2026

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**COVER PHOTOGRAPH** MATTHEW HERITAGE
NEVER LEAVE BURNING CANDLES UNATTENDED

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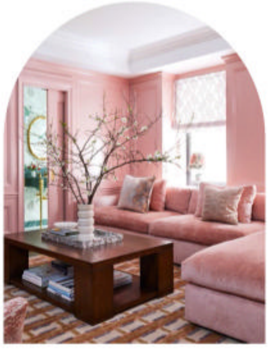

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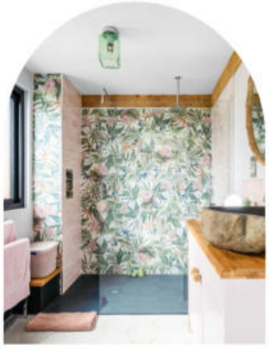

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# Welcome

If Christmas has crept up on you, and you're in need of some seasonal interiors inspiration, just take a look at the many simple and stress-free ideas in our houses this month. For understated chic, Gill Martin's beautiful new build is the epitome of low-key festive style (p48). Designer Emma Sims-Hilditch's Cotswolds home exudes warmth with her use of twinkling lights and an abundance of foliage (p60). She has created a timeless and relaxed look perfect for family gatherings. And if you're getting ready for a party, check out Harriet Hastings' amazing longhouse and its joyful and vibrant decorative style (p76).

**FIONA MACE, EDITOR**

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**SYNDICATION**
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(efi.mandrides@futurenet.com)

**CIRCULATION**
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(gabrielle.hagii@futurenet.com)

**ADVERTISING**
**Commercial Director** Clare Chamberlain
(clare.chamberlain@futurenet.com)
**Commercial Director** Glenn Iceton
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**Ad Director** Amanda Burns (amanda.burns@futurenet.com)
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**INSERT SALES**
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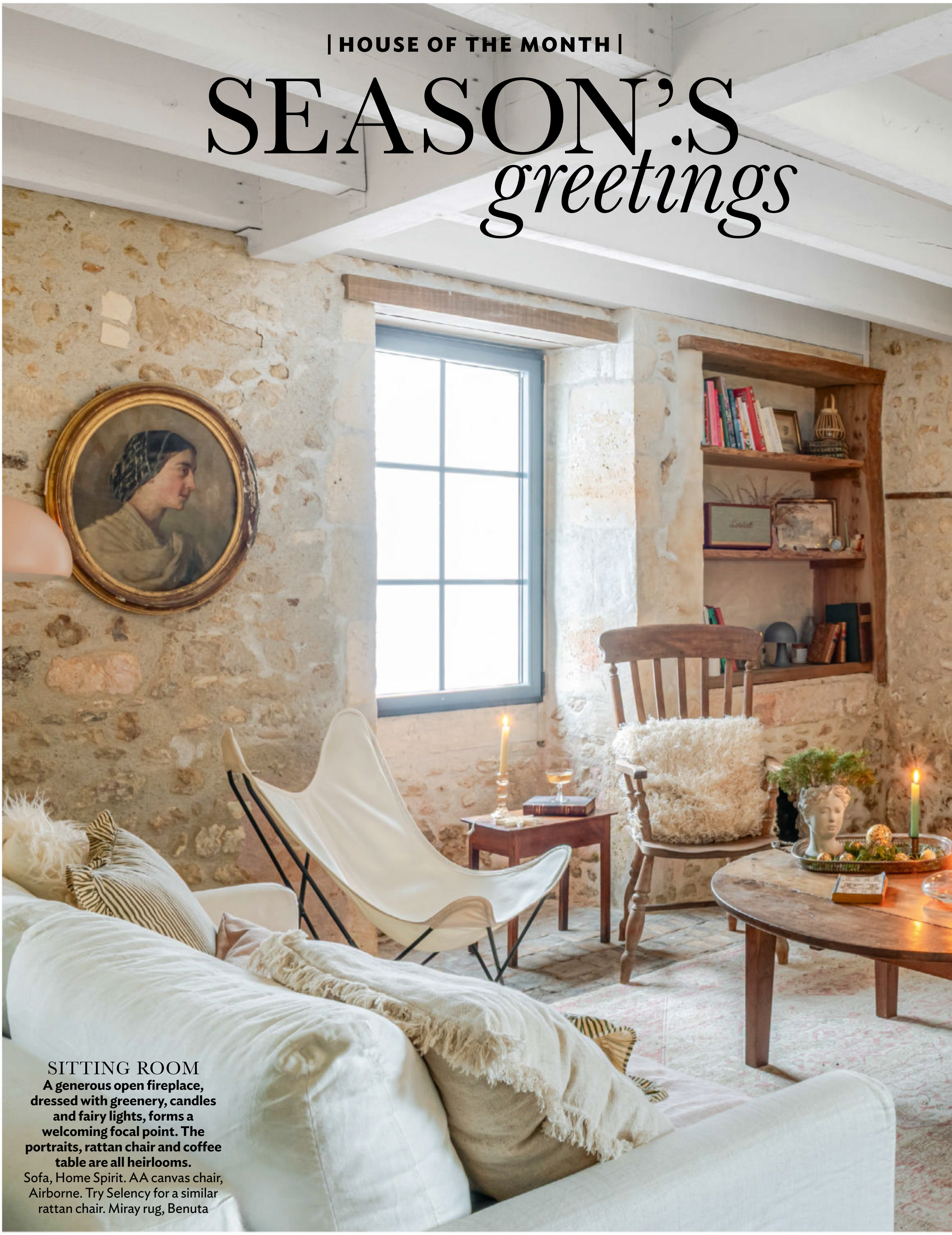
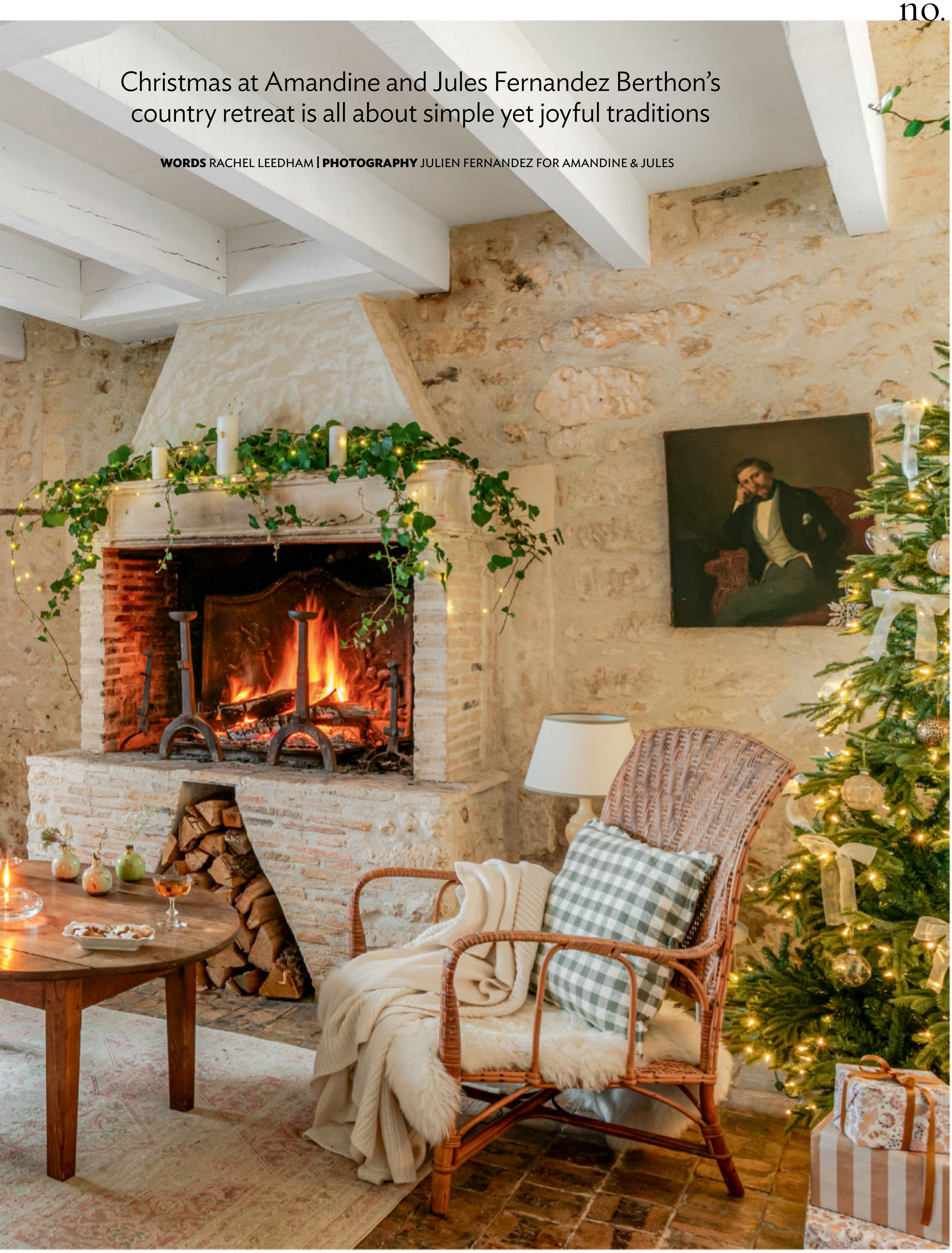
# SEASON'S *greetings*



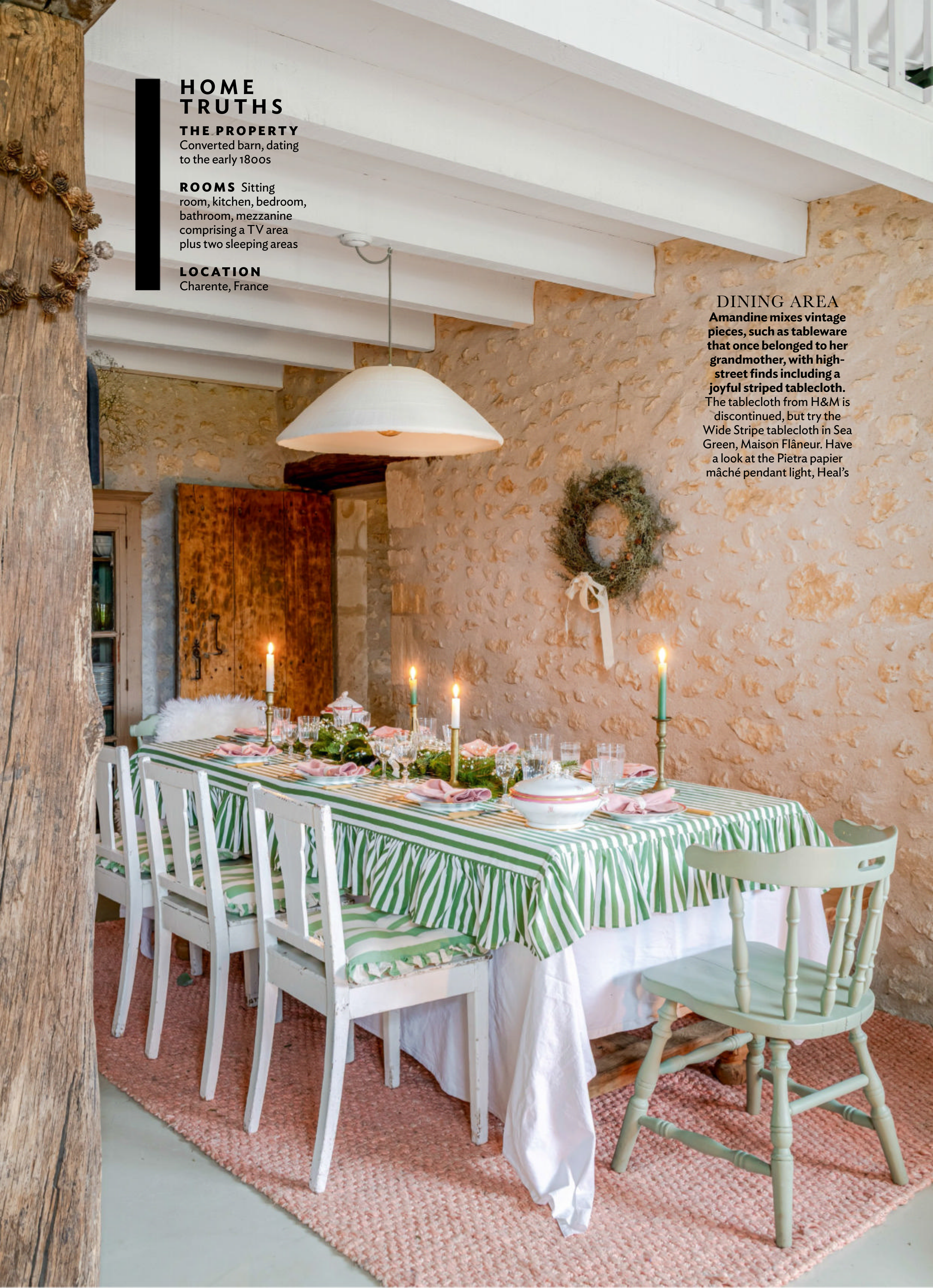
SITTING ROOM

**A generous open fireplace, dressed with greenery, candles and fairy lights, forms a welcoming focal point. The portraits, rattan chair and coffee table are all heirlooms.**
Sofa, Home Spirit. AA canvas chair, Airborne. Try Selency for a similar rattan chair. Miray rug, Benuta



Christmas at Amandine and Jules Fernandez Berthon's country retreat is all about simple yet joyful traditions

**WORDS** RACHEL LEEDHAM | **PHOTOGRAPHY** JULIEN FERNANDEZ FOR AMANDINE & JULES



## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** Converted barn, dating to the early 1800s

**ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, mezzanine comprising a TV area plus two sleeping areas

**LOCATION** Charente, France

DINING AREA **Amandine mixes vintage pieces, such as tableware that once belonged to her grandmother, with high-street finds including a joyful striped tablecloth.** The tablecloth from H&M is discontinued, but try the Wide Stripe tablecloth in Sea Green, Maison Flâneur. Have a look at the Pietra papier mâché pendant light, Heal's

In the Charente home of Amandine and Jules Fernandez Berthon, Christmas centres on the dining table, where the family gathers to enjoy festive dishes served on heirloom porcelain once belonging to Amandine's grandmother. 'This house is full of things that remind us of our families, along with traditions that take us straight back to childhood,' says Amandine. 'On Christmas Day, for instance, we always have an afternoon tea of brioches and thick hot chocolate – a custom from southwestern France passed down from my grandmother.'

Set in idyllic countryside, the house is just 15 kilometres from the couple's main residence in a town close to Angoulême. 'When we bought it four years ago, we were still living in an apartment in Bordeaux,' recalls Amandine, who shares both homes with Jules and their two sons, Ruben, 14 and Octave, 10. 'From the beginning, this place became the heart of our family gatherings – and we've celebrated Christmas here ever since.'

The building, a converted agricultural barn dating from the early 1800s, required no structural work. But with only one bedroom and an open mezzanine area, it needed more sleeping options. The couple's solution was a clever cabin-like structure – or cabane – designed by a joiner friend on the mezzanine. It holds a snug double bed space, with the boys' bedroom tucked under the eaves above. 'It works really well – and at Christmas, when we have a full house, we often rent a friend's nearby gîte, too,' Amandine says.

Amandine, a stylist and writer, and Jules, a photographer, were keen to bring their creative skills to the interiors. 'The previous owners had gone quite bold with colour – bright yellow in the kitchen, lime green in the bedroom, turquoise woodwork,' Amandine recalls. 'Because the layout of the barn is so open, I wanted a sense of harmony, so I started by painting all the woodwork off-white.'

From there, a gentle green palette emerged, inspired by the surrounding landscape. A soft lichen tone appears in the kitchen, main bedroom and mezzanine, where it is paired with a charming woodland print. In the bedroom, a striped green-and-white wallpaper adds interest to the chimney breast. 'I added touches of pink – a rug here, a lamp there and through the porcelain,' says Amandine.

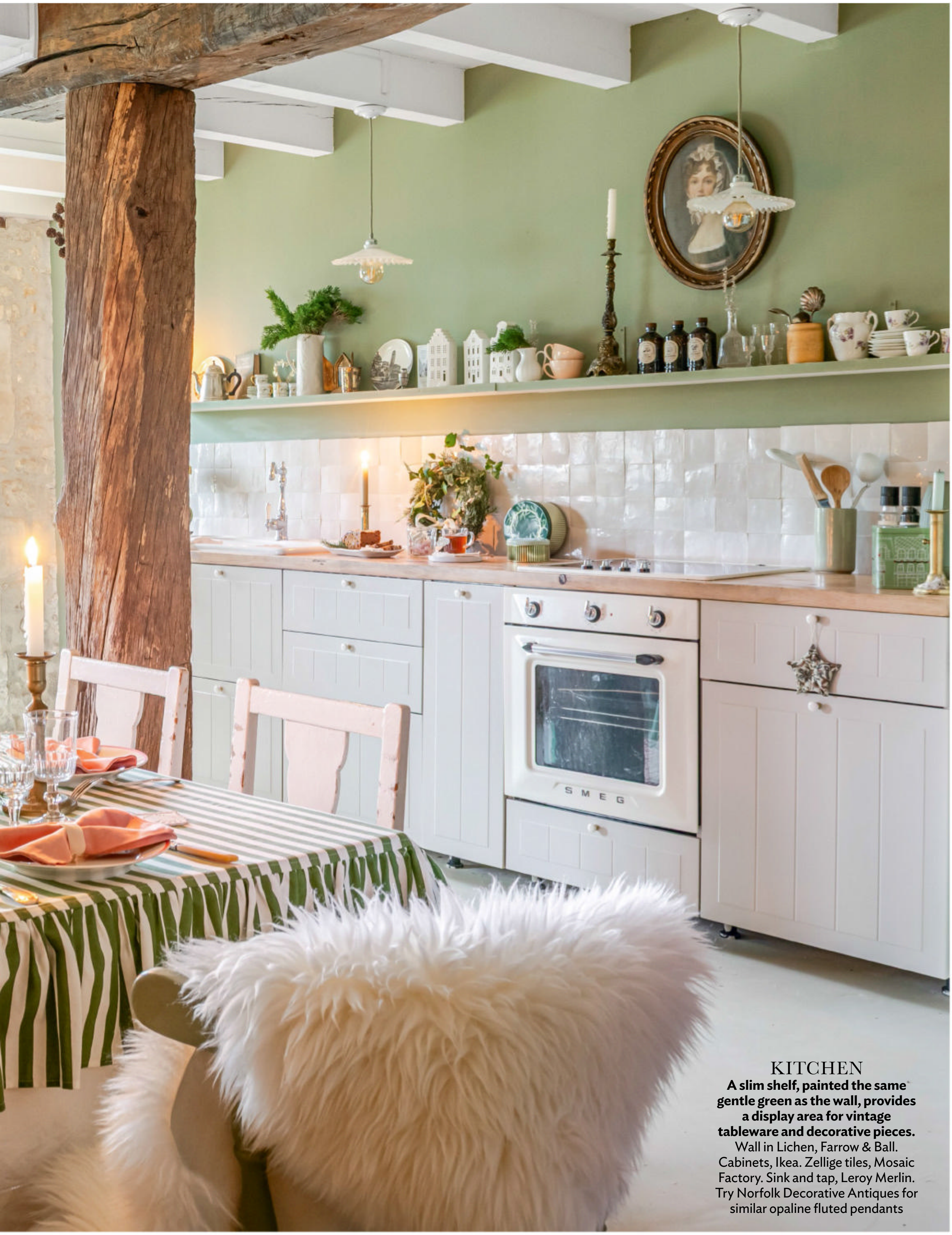
Almost everything in the house is inherited or found: portraits of Amandine's ancestors hang on the walls; the sitting room table once sat in her grandparents' garden and the kitchen's worktop was fashioned from an old wooden board found outside. The simple Ikea units, meanwhile, were elevated with porcelain cupboard handles.

Amandine takes the same thoughtful approach to Christmas decorating. 'Rather than buy lots of things, we use ivy, pine and bay from the garden,' she explains. 'Octave loves helping – we do a little bit each weekend in the run-up.' Last year, the pair took a wreath-making workshop – 'so there will definitely be a few more wreaths. I guess we can add those to our list of traditions,' she says. Christmas here is clearly about the simple pleasures: rituals, generosity and the joy of being home. ㉕

*The house is available to rent @maisonduclocher*

STAIRCASE

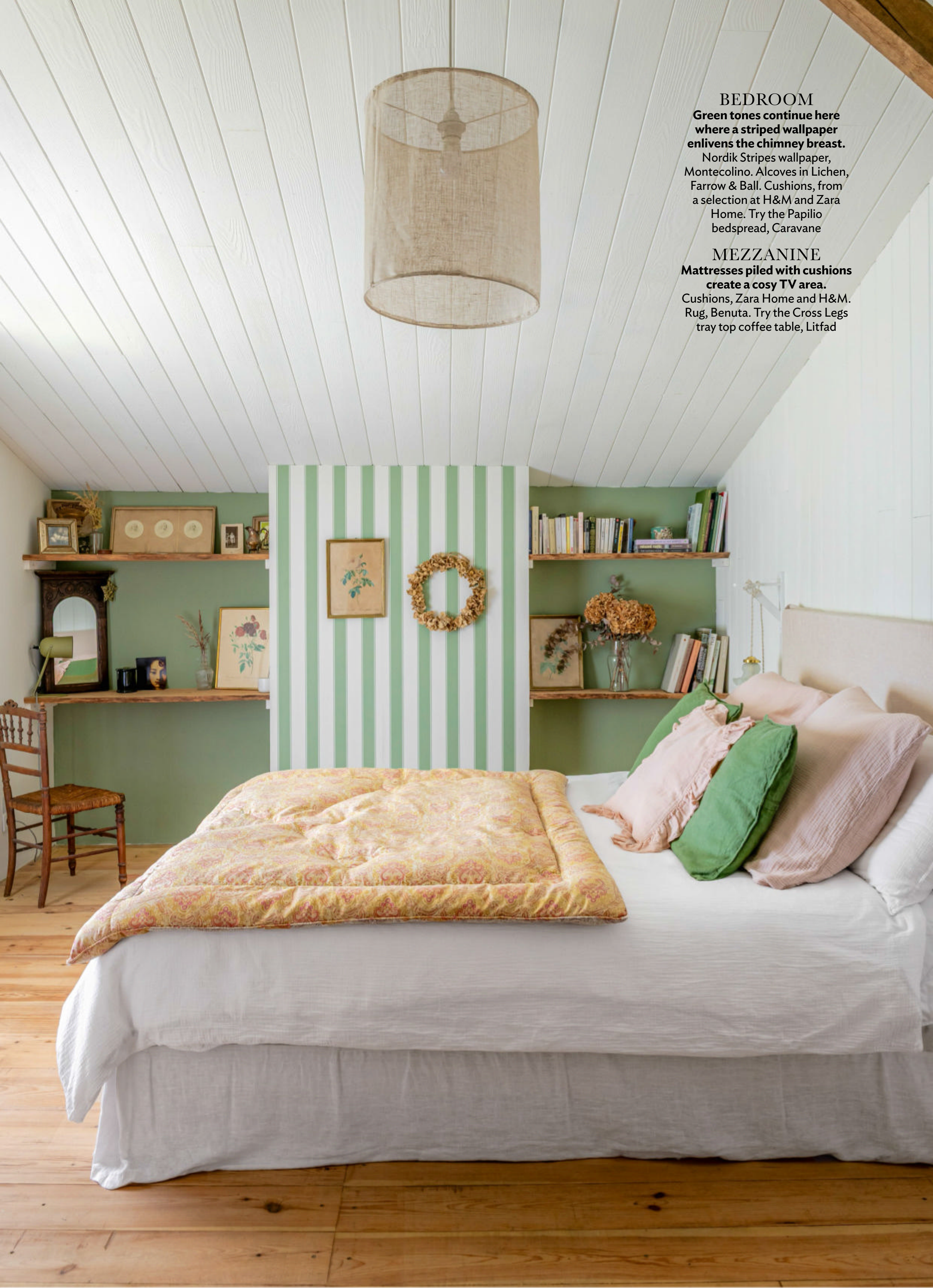
**Built by a joiner friend, the staircase was painted in the same off-white colour as the beams and the mezzanine for a harmonious feel**



KITCHEN

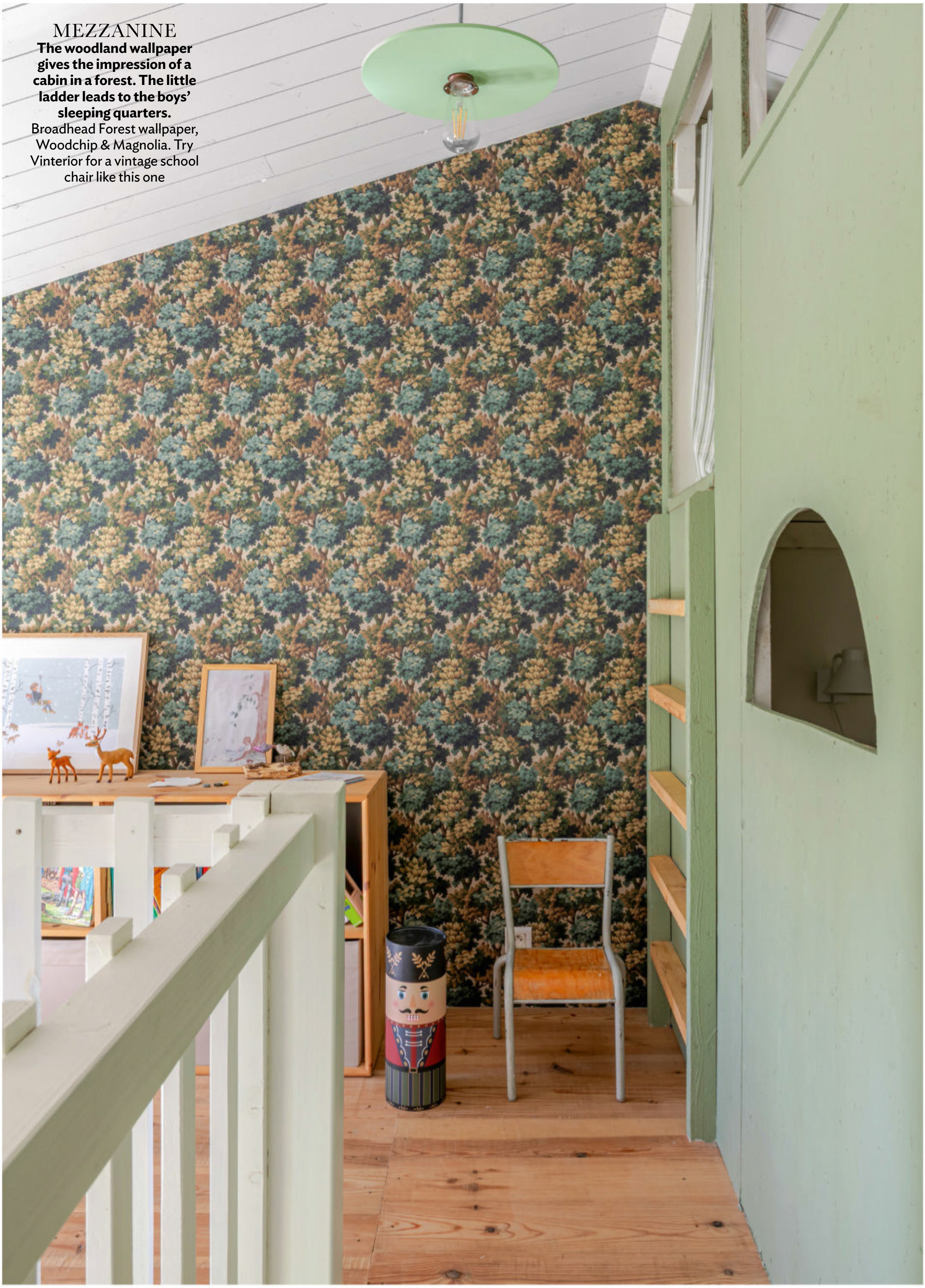
**A slim shelf, painted the same gentle green as the wall, provides a display area for vintage tableware and decorative pieces.** Wall in Lichen, Farrow & Ball. Cabinets, Ikea. Zellige tiles, Mosaic Factory. Sink and tap, Leroy Merlin. Try Norfolk Decorative Antiques for similar opaline fluted pendants

‘I adore English literature and wanted to create a cosy, slightly old-fashioned cottage feel with comforting details such as floral armchairs’



BEDROOM
**Green tones continue here where a striped wallpaper enlivens the chimney breast.** Nordik Stripes wallpaper, Montecolino. Alcoves in Lichen, Farrow & Ball. Cushions, from a selection at H&M and Zara Home. Try the Papilio bedspread, Caravane

MEZZANINE
**Mattresses piled with cushions create a cosy TV area.** Cushions, Zara Home and H&M. Rug, Benuta. Try the Cross Legs tray top coffee table, Litfad



MEZZANINE

**The woodland wallpaper gives the impression of a cabin in a forest. The little ladder leads to the boys' sleeping quarters.** Broadhead Forest wallpaper, Woodchip & Magnolia. Try Vinterior for a vintage school chair like this one

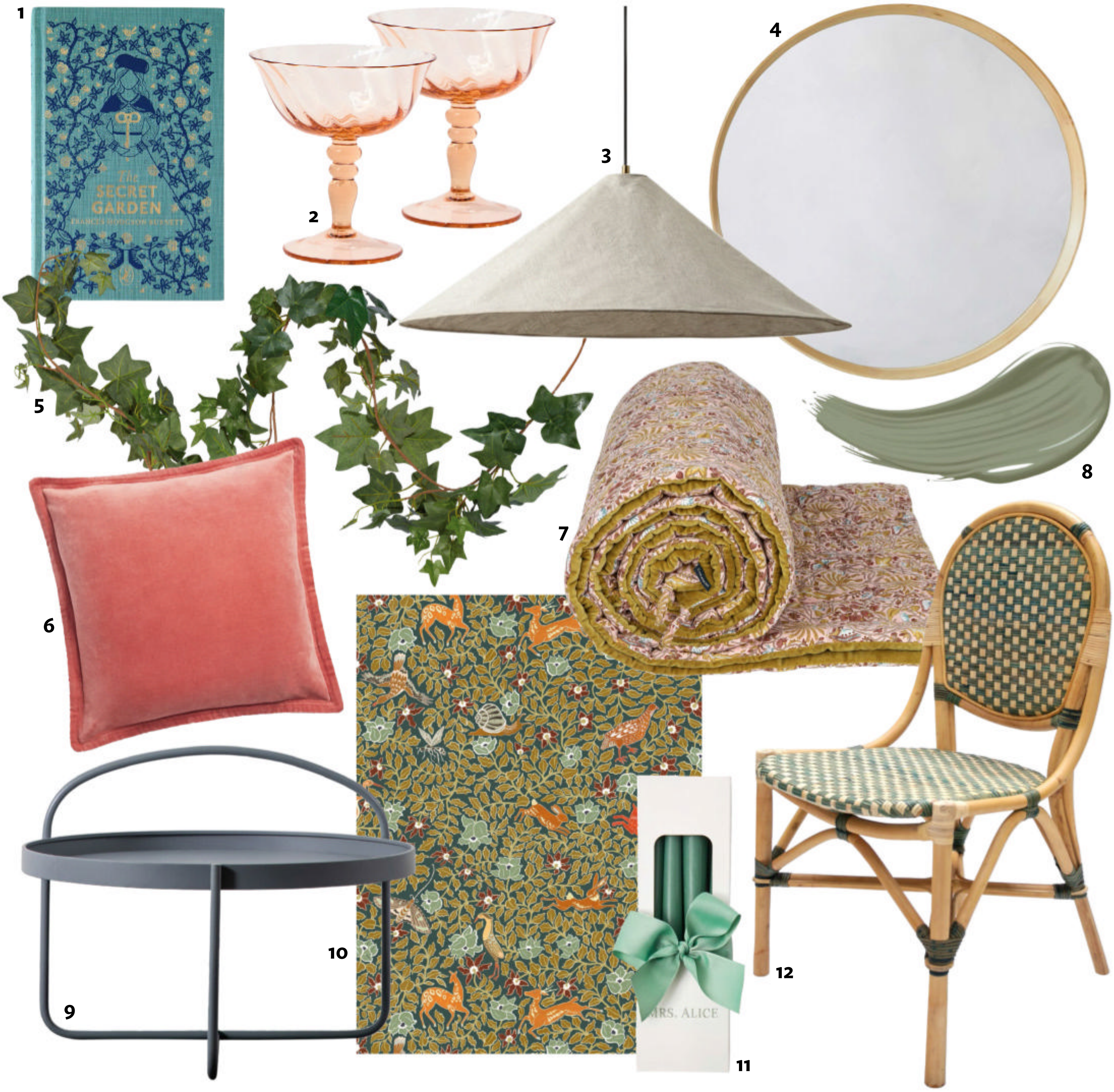
BEDROOM

**This cabin-like structure on the mezzanine has a cosy double bed space, which is perfect for when the couple have overnight guests.** Dunelm sells a black and white check cushion. Try Heal's for a similar wall light

‘I wanted a sense of harmony because the layout of the barn is so open, so I started by painting all the woodwork off-white’

# STYLE *inspiration*

To create a cosy cottage interior with charm, Amandine mixed soft sage and pink tones with whimsical prints and favourite heirlooms



**1** *The Secret Garden*: Puffin clothbound classics book, £18.99, Anthropologie **2** The Mia coupe glasses in Pink, £19.50 per pair, Oliver Bonas **3** Siya collapsible oversized linen shade, £110, lights&lamps **4** Kendrick large round wall mirror in Oak, £289, Danetti **5** Ivy garland, £5.99, Homesense **6** Washed velvet cushion in Coral Pink, £30, French Connection **7** Papilio foot cover, £265, Caravane **8** Lichen modern emulsion, £63 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball **9** Cesalie cross legs coffee table, £75.99, Ebern Designs at Wayfair **10** Haresfield Walk wallpaper in Petrol, £189 a roll, Josephine Munsey at Lime Lace **11** Candles in Dusty Green, £18 for set of eight, Mrs Alice **12** Rattan dining chair in Green, £425, Birdie Fortescue

**FEATURE** HOLLY PHILLIPS

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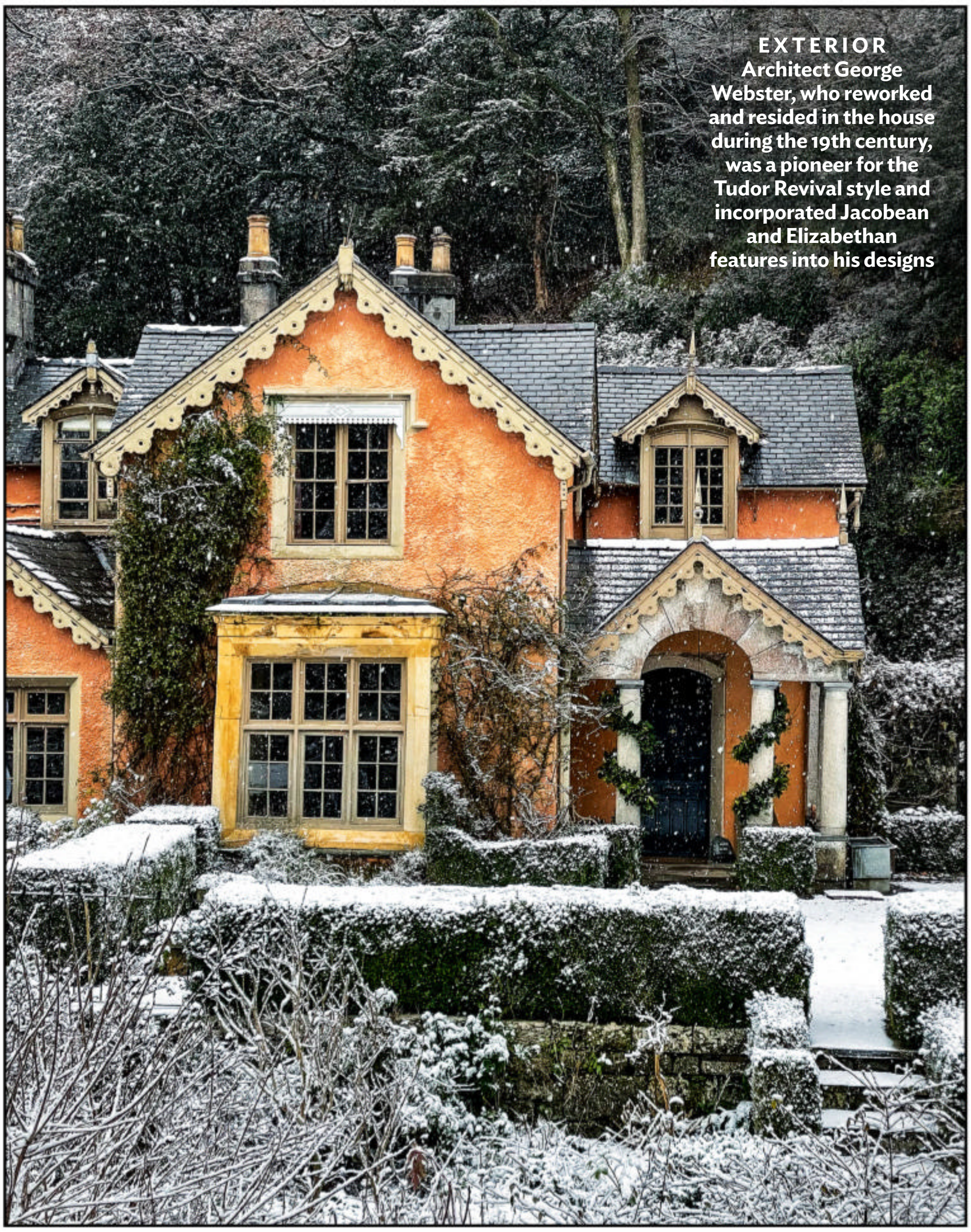

**EXTERIOR** Architect George Webster, who reworked and resided in the house during the 19th century, was a pioneer for the Tudor Revival style and incorporated Jacobean and Elizabethan features into his designs

***Nina and Sam Ward fell head over heels for this substantial 19th-century historical home in Cumbria and are slowly but surely returning it back to its former glory***

**WORDS** CHARLOTTE LUXFORD | **PHOTOGRAPHY** NINA CLARIDGE

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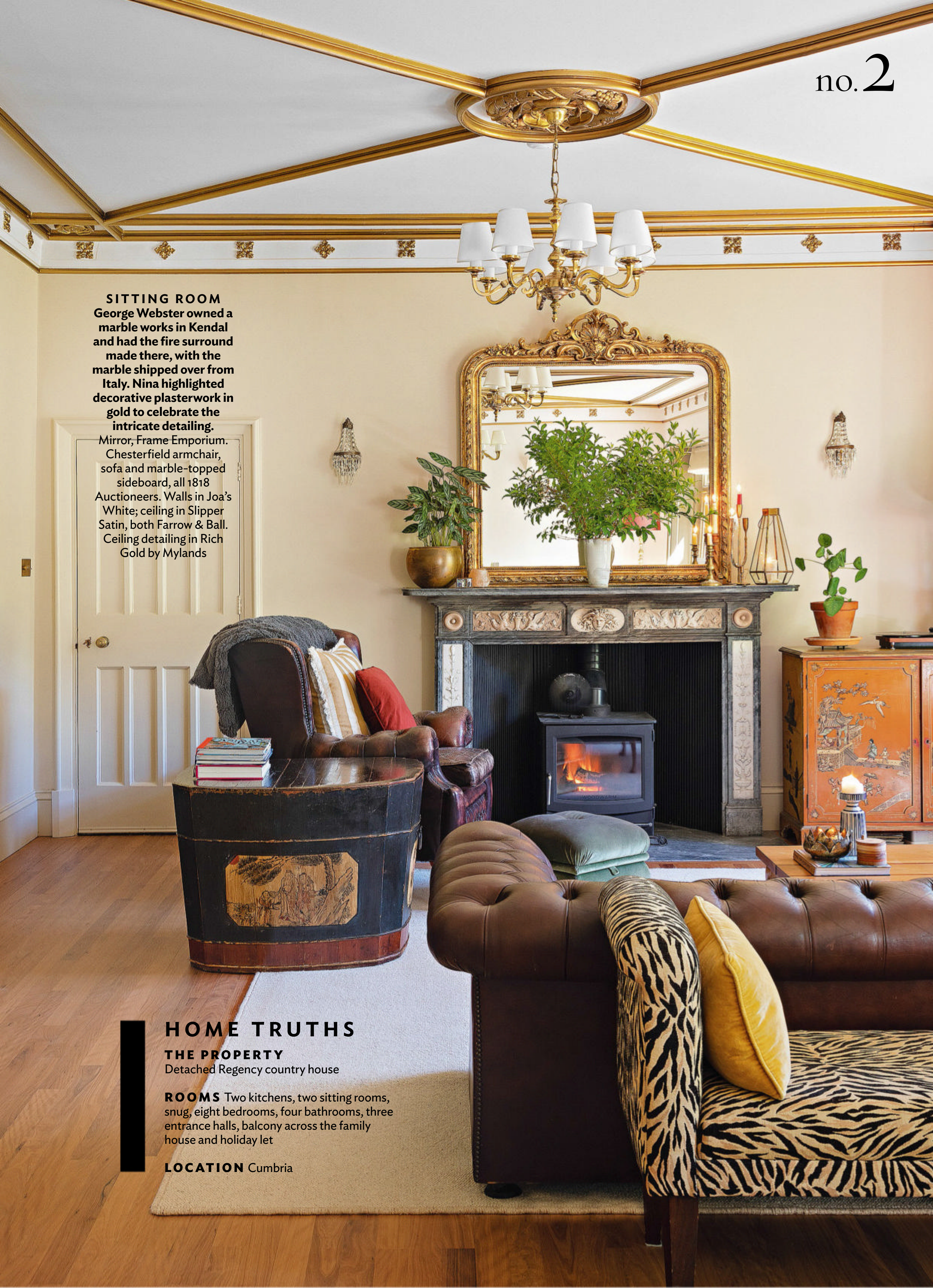


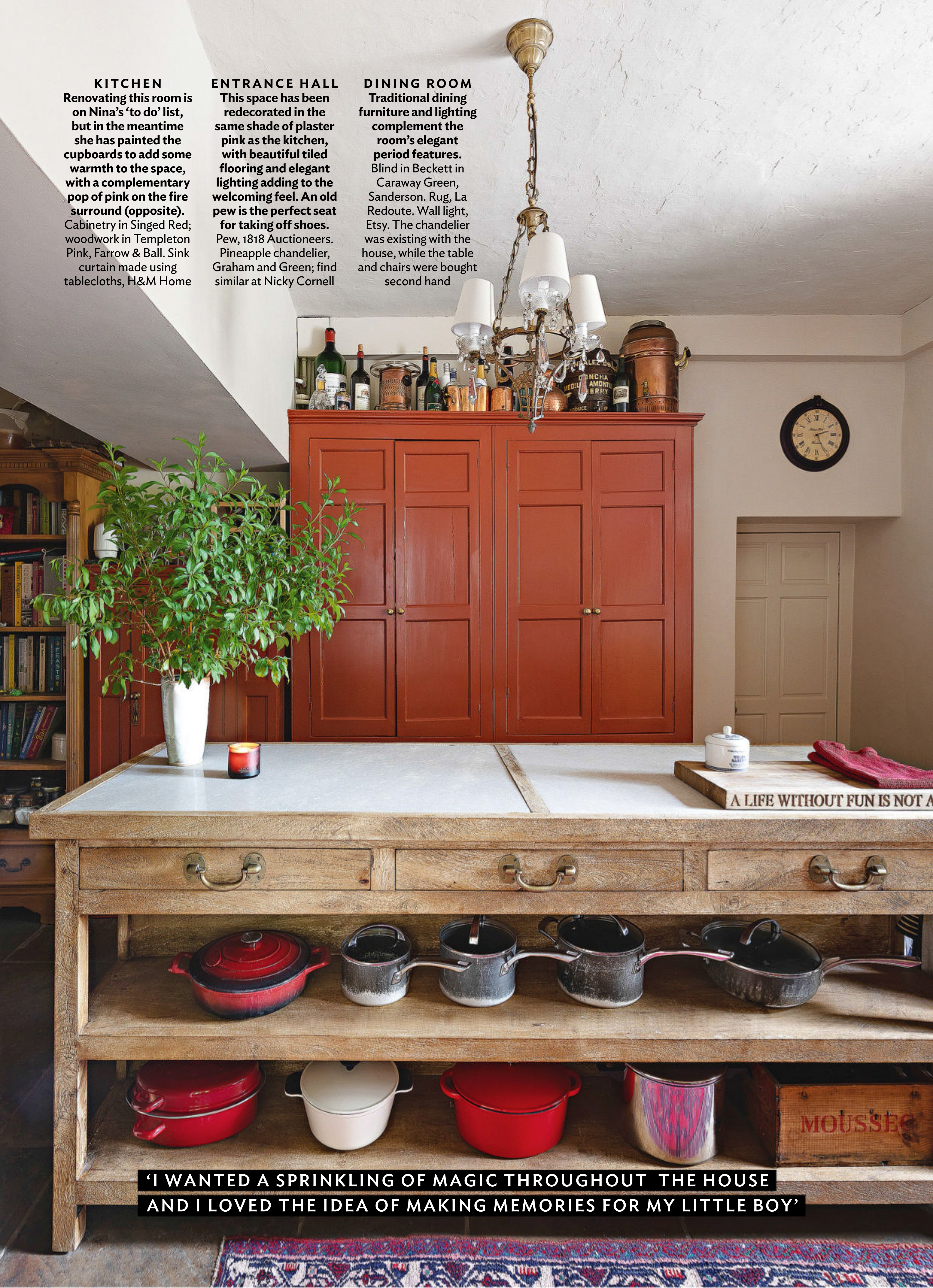
**SITTING ROOM**
**George Webster owned a marble works in Kendal and had the fire surround made there, with the marble shipped over from Italy. Nina highlighted decorative plasterwork in gold to celebrate the intricate detailing.** Mirror, Frame Emporium. Chesterfield armchair, sofa and marble-topped sideboard, all 1818 Auctioneers. Walls in Joa's White; ceiling in Slipper Satin, both Farrow & Ball. Ceiling detailing in Rich Gold by Mylands

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**
Detached Regency country house

**ROOMS** Two kitchens, two sitting rooms, snug, eight bedrooms, four bathrooms, three entrance halls, balcony across the family house and holiday let

**LOCATION** Cumbria



**KITCHEN**

**Renovating this room is on Nina's 'to do' list, but in the meantime she has painted the cupboards to add some warmth to the space, with a complementary pop of pink on the fire surround (opposite).** Cabinetry in Singed Red; woodwork in Templeton Pink, Farrow & Ball. Sink curtain made using tablecloths, H&M Home

**ENTRANCE HALL**

**This space has been redecorated in the same shade of plaster pink as the kitchen, with beautiful tiled flooring and elegant lighting adding to the welcoming feel. An old pew is the perfect seat for taking off shoes.** Pew, 1818 Auctioneers. Pineapple chandelier, Graham and Green; find similar at Nicky Cornell

**DINING ROOM**

**Traditional dining furniture and lighting complement the room's elegant period features.** Blind in Beckett in Caraway Green, Sanderson. Rug, La Redoute. Wall light, Etsy. The chandelier was existing with the house, while the table and chairs were bought second hand

'I WANTED A SPRINKLING OF MAGIC THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE AND I LOVED THE IDEA OF MAKING MEMORIES FOR MY LITTLE BOY'

CROUCH END
BREAD

Photographer Nina Ward had long dreamed of taking on a country estate, and often kept an eye on property listings looking for 'the one'. It wasn't until she spotted an eight-bedroom house in Cumbria's Lake District with a rich history, 12.5 acres of ancient woodland and existing self-catered accommodation that she felt her heart skip a beat – it was too good an opportunity to miss.

With her husband Sam's experience in hospitality, the idea of running a holiday let had been something they'd always talked about and this house presented the chance to bring in additional revenue, as well as create a beautiful family home for themselves and son Freddie.

The house, Eller How, was a former cottage near Cartmel that had been extended by architect George Webster between 1827 and 1850 after he inherited it from his father in 1818. George received some famous literary figures in his time, including poet William Wordsworth and author Edward Lear.

Nina was drawn to its romantic past, as well as its gothic-inspired architecture. 'I was blown away by its history and the exterior – I hadn't seen anything like it and we were in love,' she says. The couple snapped up the house without hesitation and moved in in April 2021.

However, the house needed a lot of TLC and they decided to prioritise the holiday let side of the property while post-Covid staycations were at their peak. However, no sooner had they started, Nina and Sam hit their first hurdle. It turned out that a number of roof valleys needed fixing first and in the midst of the work a storm hit. 'I was amazed the temporary tenting and scaffolding stayed up,' recalls Nina.

On the family side of the property, there were a number of jobs to tackle before the more

**BEDROOM**
**Pretty patterns add a whimsical feel. Nina made the sink curtain and painted the recess red for a pop of colour.** Adelaïde wallpaper; woodwork in Singed Red, both Farrow & Ball. Sink curtain in Amoli Rouge, Warner House. Garland, Mark Hearld

'fun' task of decorating, including reglazing, insulating and replastering, which the couple undertook with the help of Nina's father-in-law.

The main living spaces were first to be rejuvenated, starting with the snug. The hero of the space was the unusual Australian brushbox timber flooring, but it wasn't in great shape. 'There were squares on the floor where they had simply sanded around the rugs, it was crazy,' says Nina. In the sitting room, Nina reinstated the brass chandeliers, which had been coated in emulsion, and she painted the cornicing and ceiling mouldings gold to highlight their oak leaf and acorn motifs. 'I also covered the bay window ceiling in an oak-themed wallpaper as a nod to the plasterwork,' adds Nina.

The couple were keen to host Christmas so they decided to tackle the family bathroom – the worst room of all. 'The shower scalded you one minute and would freeze you the next, there was mould on the ceiling and the sink wasn't even attached to the wall – everything about it was bad.'

It was finished just in the nick of time on Christmas Eve and Nina and Sam took a break before embarking on a rewire and redecorating the bedrooms. Nina opted for a jungle theme in her son's room, while the main bedroom was drenched in a cocooning muted green.

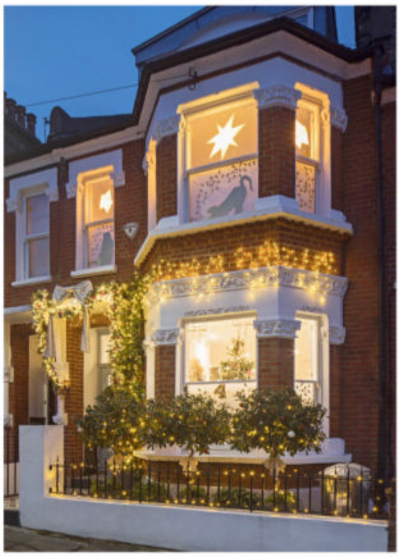
After four years of hard graft, there's still plenty to do – the kitchen is next on the list – but Nina's not lost heart. 'Despite feeling that the house has thrown up problem after problem, I've come to realise that we don't need to fix everything – we just need to learn to live with it and prioritise,' says Nina. 'The value of living here outweighs the negatives; we're so lucky this is where we get to spend the rest of our lives.'

*ellerhowhouse.co.uk*

**MAIN BEDROOM** **Nina wanted to use a rich palette of colours that would be in keeping with the house's history so chose to colour-drench the main bedroom in an 'earthy, muddied green', which gives this space a cosy and cocooning feel.** Walls and woodwork in Dibber, Farrow & Ball. Brass bed, 1818 Auctioneers. Cushions, Raine & Humble

**MAIN BATHROOM** **The starting point for this scheme was the classic chequerboard tiled floor. Nina installed panelling to add character, while the wallpaper gives a lived-in feel.** Floor tiles, Otto Tiles & Design. Wall lights, Lyngard. Wallpaper, Lewis & Wood. Panelling, The English Panelling Company; painted in Planter, Farrow & Ball

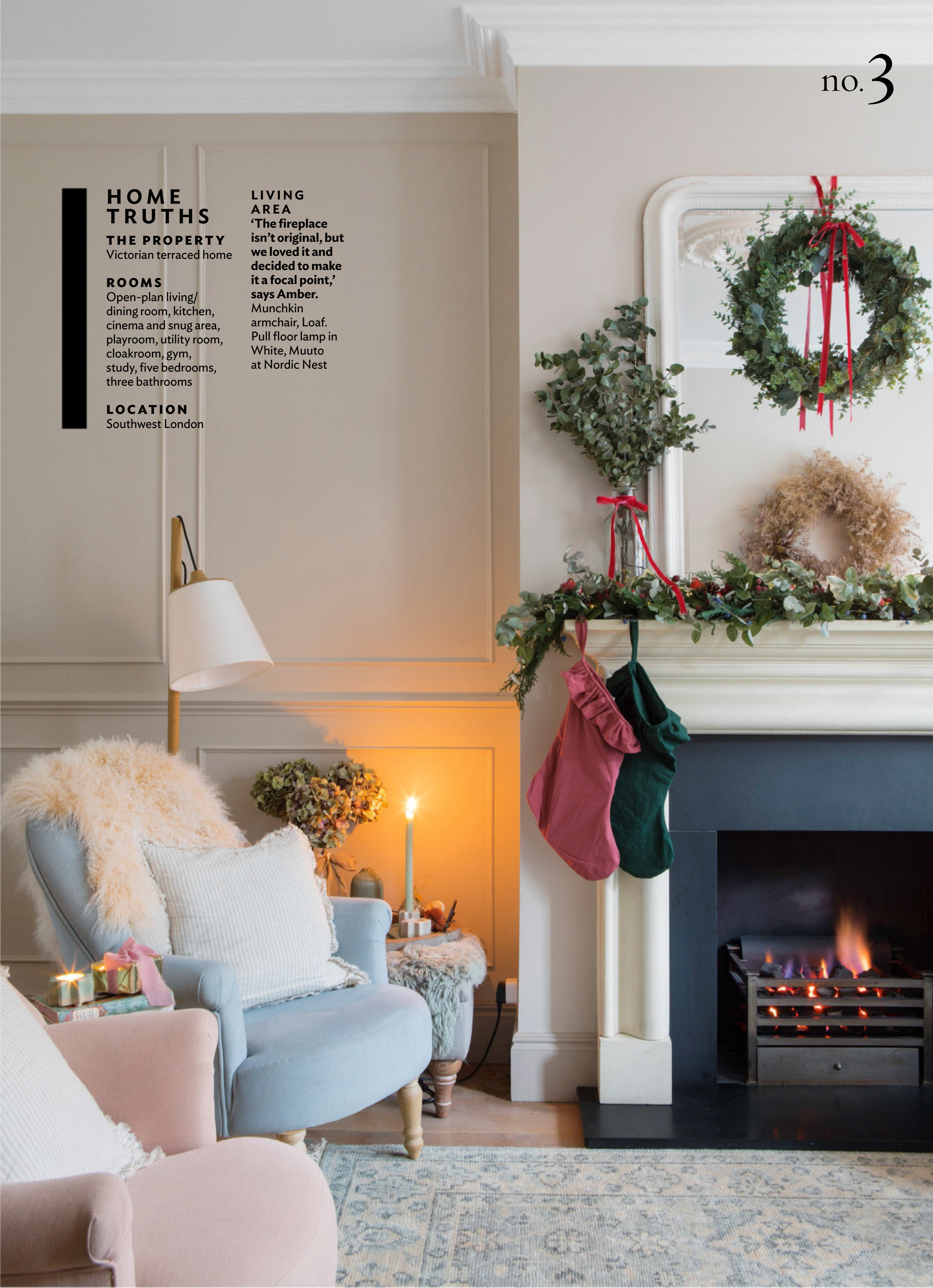
> 'I'VE CHOSEN EARTHY SHADES THROUGHOUT – IN A HOUSE LIKE THIS I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE PAINTED SURFACES LOOK AS IF THEY COULD HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THAT COLOUR'



# SPARKLE & SHINE

***At Christmas, Amber and Nick Hopkins' Victorian terrace is transformed into a magical space filled with glittering and joyful touches***

**WORDS** MARISHA TAYLOR | **PHOTOGRAPHY** JAMES FRENCH



no.3

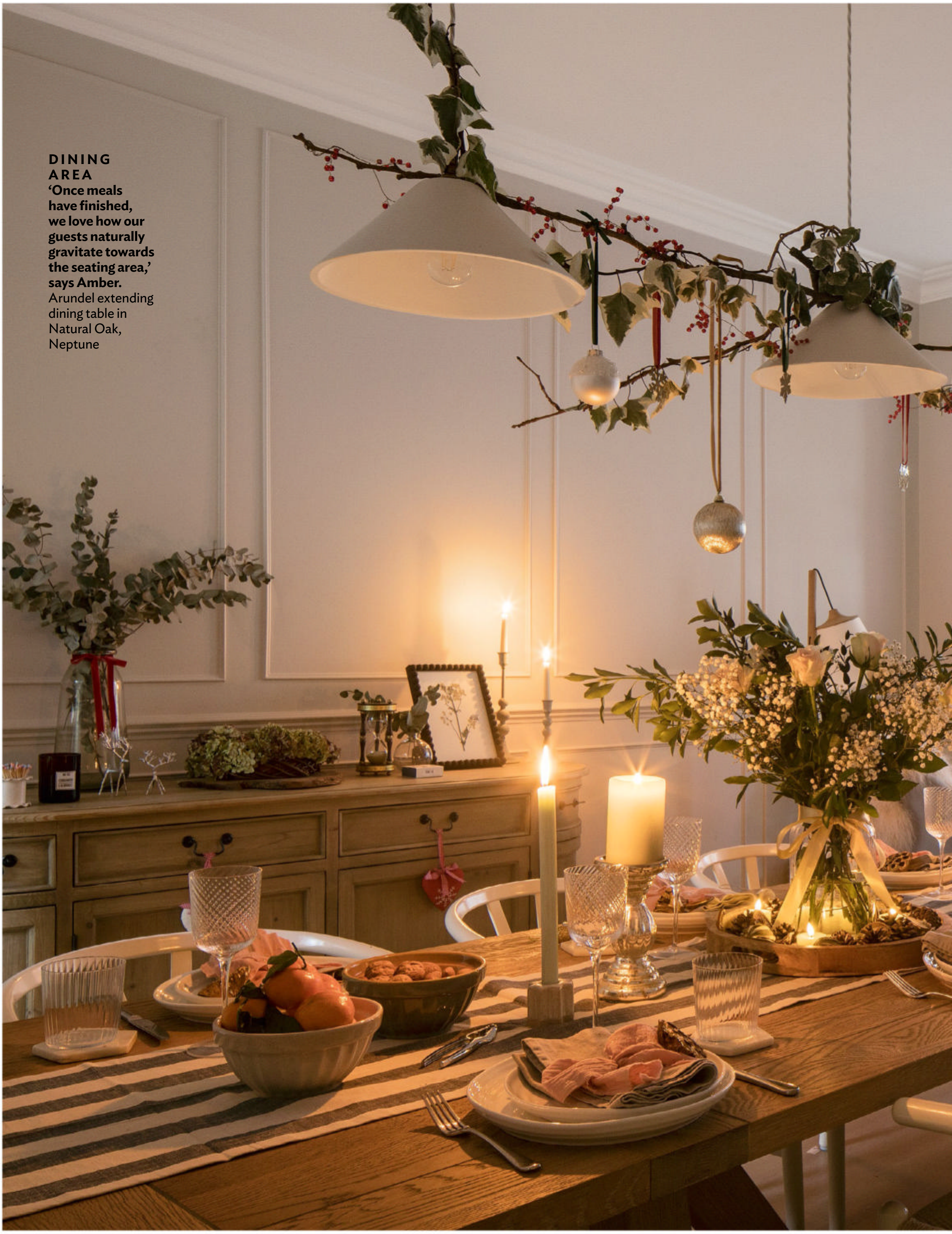
## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**
Victorian terraced home

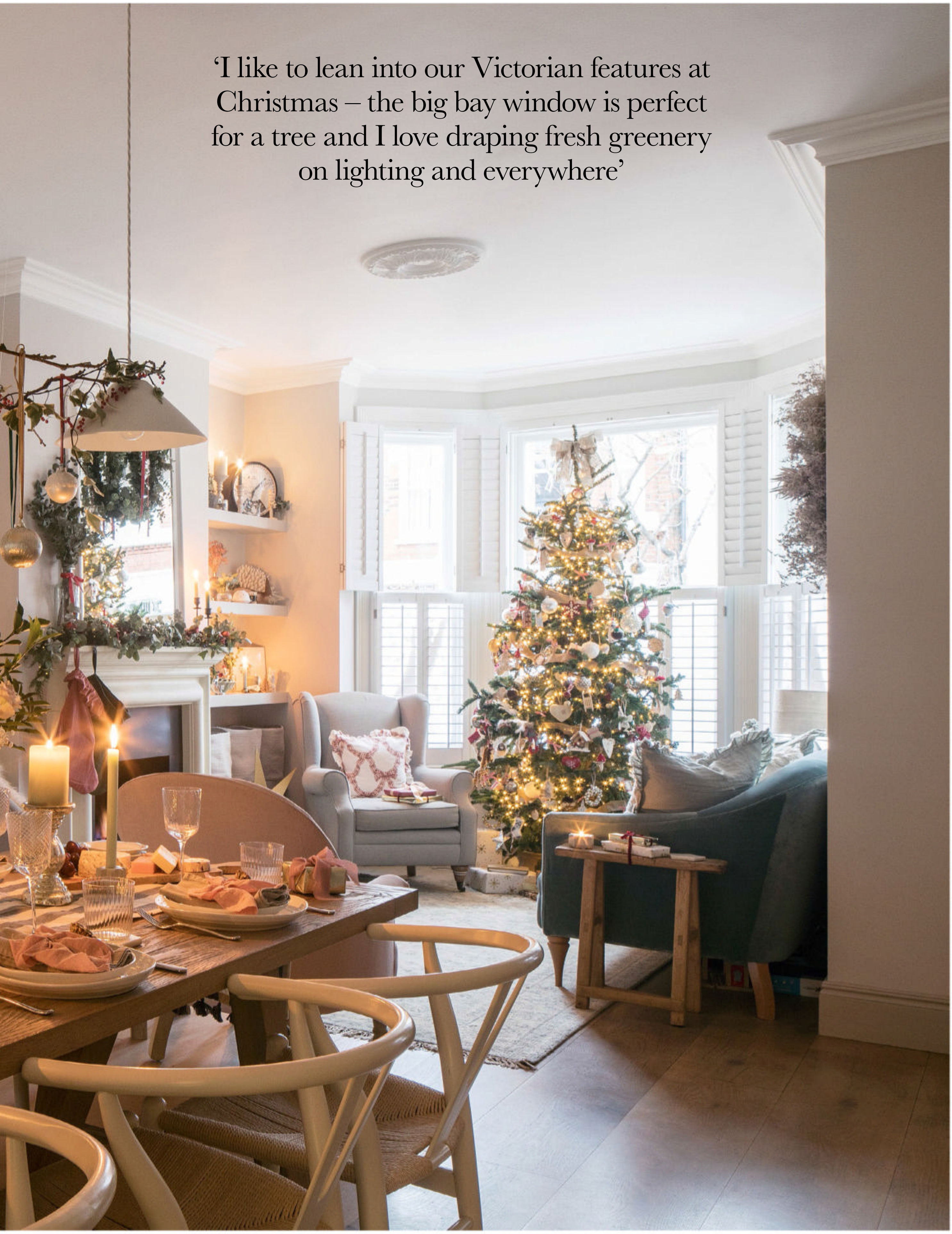
**ROOMS**
Open-plan living/dining room, kitchen, cinema and snug area, playroom, utility room, cloakroom, gym, study, five bedrooms, three bathrooms

**LOCATION**
Southwest London

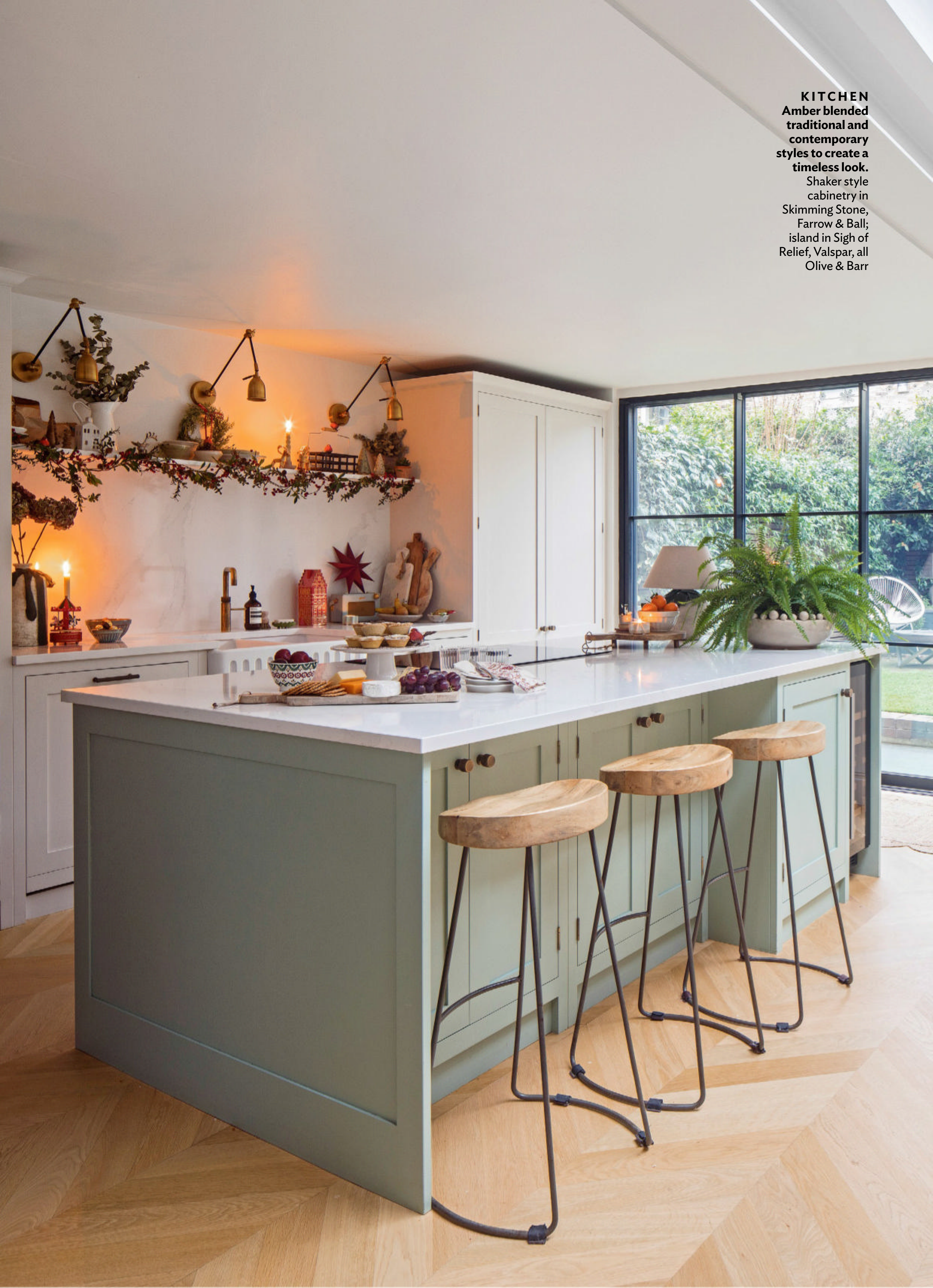
**LIVING AREA**
**'The fireplace isn't original, but we loved it and decided to make it a focal point,' says Amber.** Munchkin armchair, Loaf. Pull floor lamp in White, Muuto at Nordic Nest



**DINING AREA**
**'Once meals have finished, we love how our guests naturally gravitate towards the seating area,' says Amber.** Arundel extending dining table in Natural Oak, Neptune



‘I like to lean into our Victorian features at Christmas – the big bay window is perfect for a tree and I love draping fresh greenery on lighting and everywhere’



**KITCHEN**
**Amber blended traditional and contemporary styles to create a timeless look.** Shaker style cabinetry in Skimming Stone, Farrow & Ball; island in Sigh of Relief, Valspar, all Olive & Barr

**ENTRANCE The couple found vintage skis in Kangaroo Valley while living in Australia and loved them so much they shipped them home.** Round vintage white mirror, Melody Maison

**SON'S BEDROOM The walls are painted in two different tones to give a sense of height to the pitched walls.** Burdock bed in Highland Green Velvet, Button & Sprung. Liewood Enzo bed canopy in Mustard, Scandiborn

After three years living in Sydney, Amber, a flora and fauna artist, and her husband Nick, who works in tech, had settled happily in southwest London with their daughter Harper, now six. They loved the area's leafy streets, relaxed neighbourhood feel and easy access to the city. When they discovered Amber was expecting their second child, Hamish, now four, they knew it was time to find a larger home – but staying in the area was non-negotiable.

'We actually dismissed this house at first,' Amber admits. 'It was out of our budget, but I couldn't stop looking at the listing. It was only a street away from where we lived, had already been extended with a basement and side return and had a quirky 1980s loft dormer that made it more spacious than other homes nearby. Curiosity got the better of us, and when we finally viewed it, we were smitten, putting in an offer there and then.'

Although the property had undergone significant structural work, Amber and her husband knew they needed to reconfigure the layout to suit family life. 'We spent a long time planning how the house could evolve with us,' Amber says. A chimney stack was removed from the roof right down to the kitchen to create more floor space at the back of the house, while floor-to-ceiling sliding doors and an oriel window were added to open up the kitchen to the garden. Upstairs, they knocked through from their bedroom into the small bedroom next door to create a generous en suite and converted a former bathroom at the rear of the house into a bedroom

> 'We keep the colour scheme simple and timeless – lots of greenery, white lights and brass accents'

**MAIN BEDROOM**
**A beautiful big bay window ensures a calm and airy retreat.** Coco superking bed, Loaf. Ayrton's Richmond style shutters in Satin 9003, Plantation Shutters. Medium Bubble chandelier light, Dowsing & Reynolds

**EN SUITE**
**This was previously a small bedroom. 'To have all this space to ourselves feels like luxury,' says Amber.** Pod Pink porcelain tiles, Mandarin Stone. Crosswater MPRO free-standing bath; bath and shower mixer tap, both Drench

for Hamish. Clever joinery was designed for every room to maximise storage and create a sense of calm. 'No stone was left unturned,' Amber laughs. 'We updated everything – the roof, plumbing, electrics, windows, bathrooms, kitchen – and even redesigned the garden.'

The process wasn't without its stresses. The family lived with Amber's parents for eight months while the house was uninhabitable. 'Living out of bags with all our things in storage was tough,' she says. 'And renovation delays are so frustrating because every day costs money.' But she says the end result has been worth it. 'Our home is everything we hoped for and more,' Amber smiles. 'It's light and airy, even on the darkest days, and the layout flows beautifully, with natural textures, neutral colours and accents of greens, pinks and blues running throughout, helping to maintain the calming continuity.'

That serenity makes the perfect backdrop for Amber's love of Christmas. 'I grew up in a festive-loving household and I've always wanted to recreate that joy for my children,' she says. 'In fact, one of the reasons I fell in love with the property was imagining how it could look during the festive season – with the fireplace and staircase draped in garlands, stockings hanging from the mantel and a big Christmas tree twinkling in the bay window.'

Now, the home Amber envisioned from that very first viewing has come to life. 'It's everything I dreamed of,' she smiles. 'A beautiful, light-filled family home that feels so magical at Christmas.'
*byamberhopkins.com*

'I'd say my style is calm and considered, with a focus on natural textures and timeless pieces'

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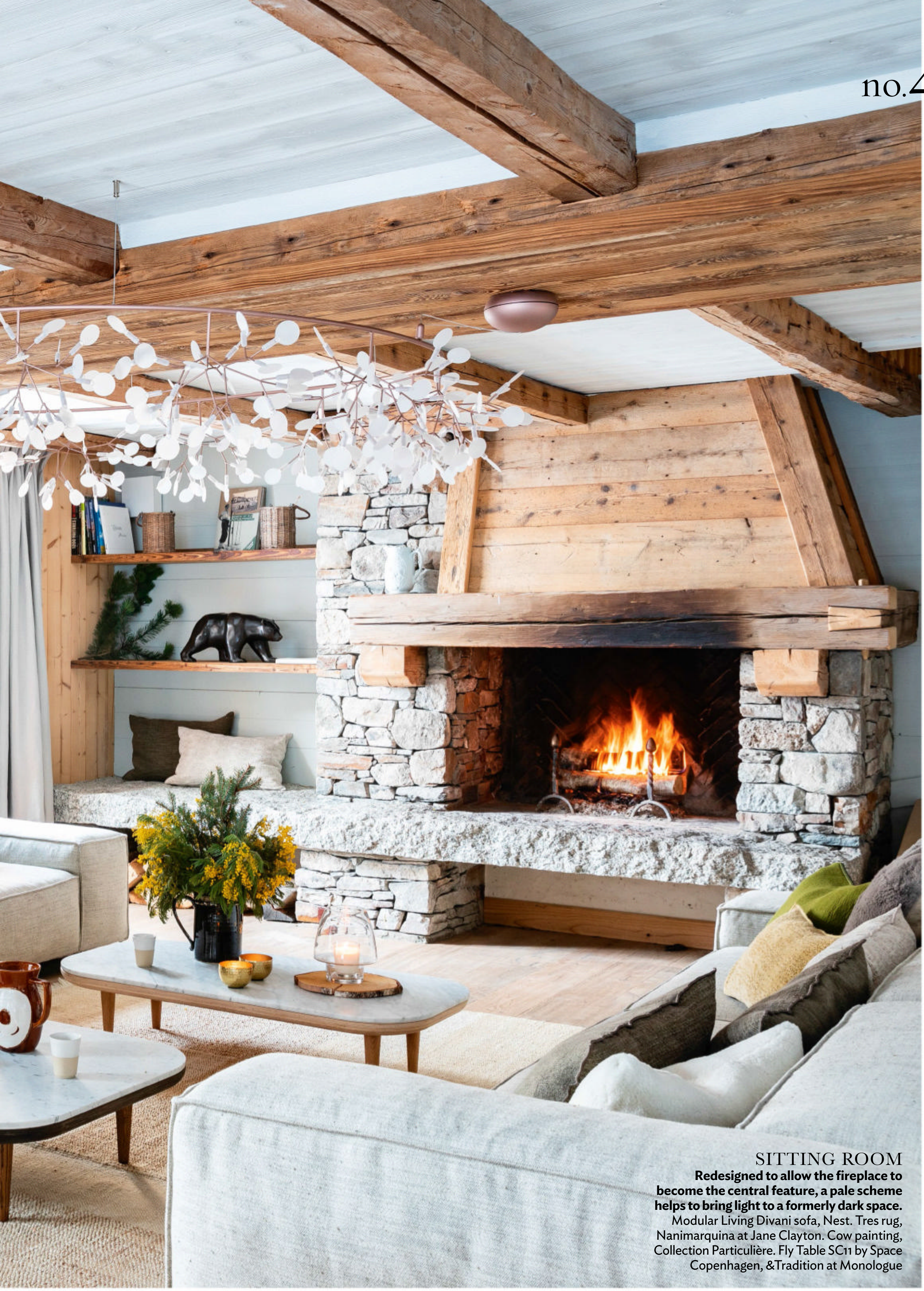
# *Winter* WONDER

Designer Hélène Roux's thoughtful modernisation of an Alpine ski chalet put light and warmth at its core

**WORDS** RUTH CORBETT | **PRODUCTION** MARIE-MAUD LEVRON/AC SCOFFONI
**PHOTOGRAPHY** YANN DERET/AC SCOFFONI



SITTING ROOM

**Redesigned to allow the fireplace to become the central feature, a pale scheme helps to bring light to a formerly dark space.** Modular Living Divani sofa, Nest. Tres rug, Nanimarquina at Jane Clayton. Cow painting, Collection Particulière. Fly Table SC11 by Space Copenhagen, &Tradition at Monologue

‘WE’VE USED WOOD EXTENSIVELY TO CREATE A HARMONIOUS, NATURAL SCHEME THAT FLOWS FROM SPACE TO SPACE’

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** Alpine chalet

**ROOMS** Sitting room, TV room, kitchen, dining area, cloakroom, four bedrooms, four bathrooms

**LOCATION** French Alps

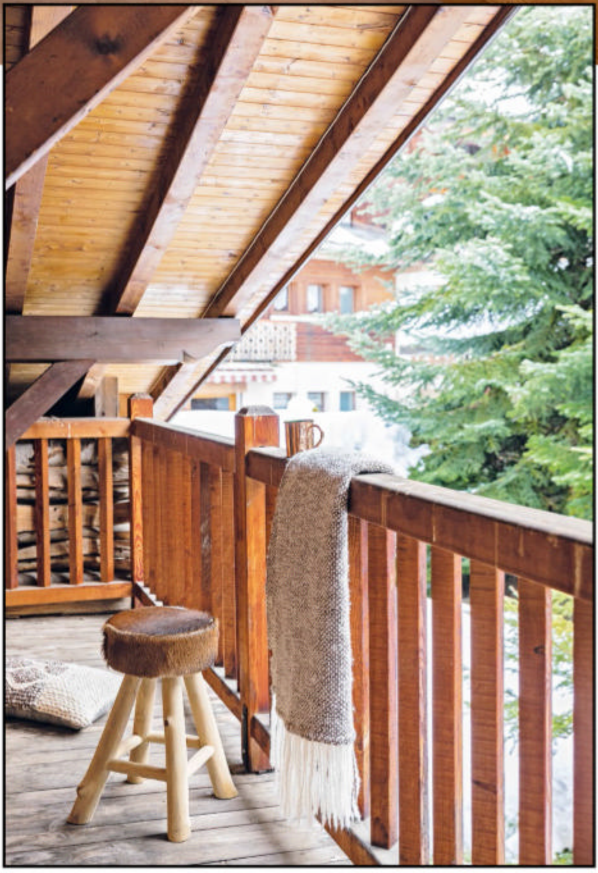
DINING AREA
**A large open hatch connects the dining space to the kitchen, for easy service, and a custom-made plank table brings a rustic twist to the modern design.** Heracleum II suspended pendant by Moooi, Made in Design. Similar table, Julia Live Edge dining table on steel legs, Hardman Design. Similar chair, Manford solid wood ladder back chair, Wayfair

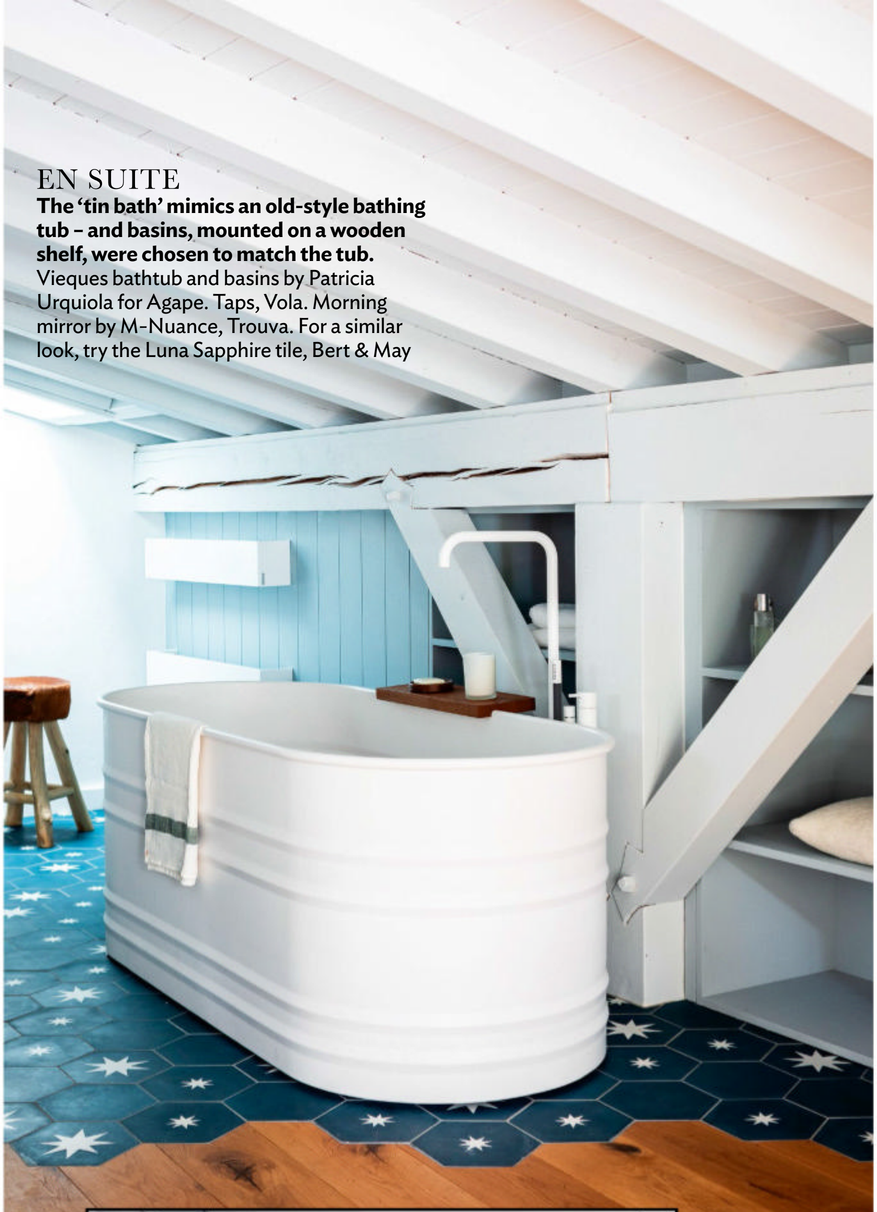
KITCHEN
**Custom made by a local carpenter using spruce wood, handleless cabinets make up a simple, compact cook space.** For similar granite worktops, try Cambria Berwyn Matt, The Marble Store

Some might say Courchevel and Verbier have more cachet, but the tiny ski town of Megève in the French Alps gamely holds its own against its glitzy neighbours. Its fairy tale ski trails, Michelin-starred restaurants and chic shopping parades were part of the appeal to the ski-obsessed English couple and their family, who in 2007 bought a ramshackle, wooden farmhouse here: a second home that they knocked into basic shape and enjoyed across many winters, and summers, before inviting interior architect, Hélène Roux, of Les Montagnardes, to take on the job of full renovation.

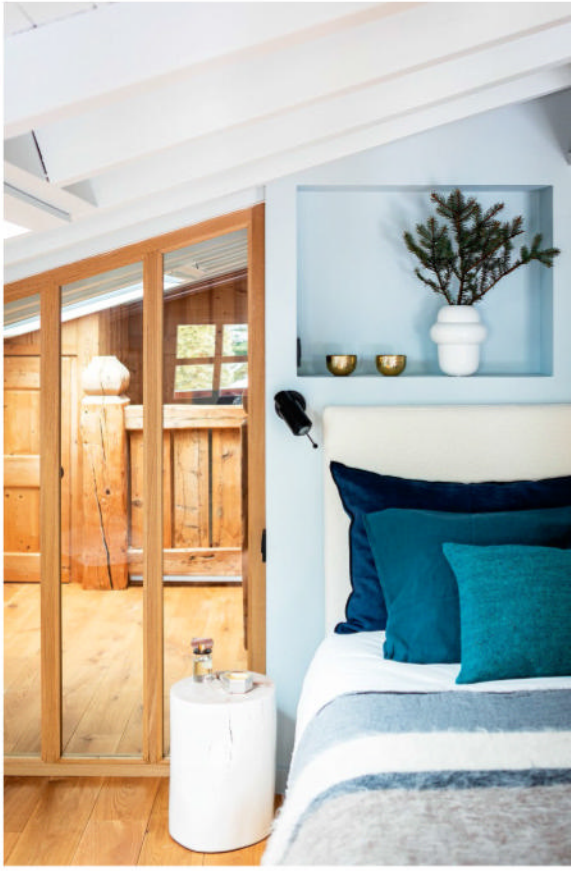
Having been introduced by family friends, the couple liked Hélène's style and classic decorating spirit, which was in tune with their own taste. 'It was a big project. Our agency developed the redesign and chose and installed all the furniture, curtains and accessories,' says Hélène. The brief was to breathe life and fluidity into the house as a whole, with the main priority being to harmonise the disparate spaces and to make them brighter, in particular in the sitting room which was to become the hub of the house. 'The room was huge but badly configured, with the fireplace too far from the living area,' explains Hélène. 'Elsewhere there was no guest cloakroom, no proper entrance and the garage and top floor were both unused, so there was plenty to do!'

The roof, balcony, doors and windows, all original to the house, were repaired and then augmented by new larch timbers

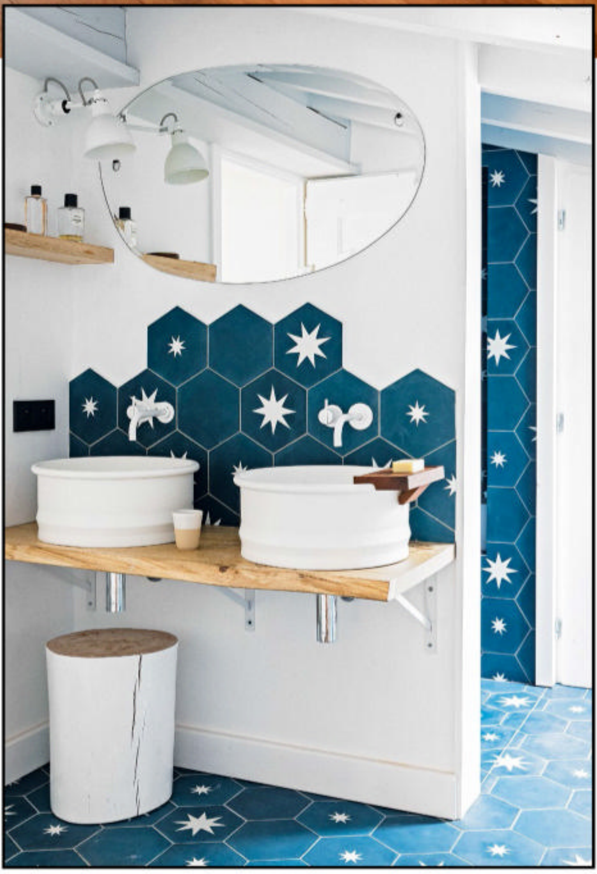




EN SUITE
**The 'tin bath' mimics an old-style bathing tub – and basins, mounted on a wooden shelf, were chosen to match the tub.**
Vieques bathtub and basins by Patricia Urquiola for Agape. Taps, Vola. Morning mirror by M-Nuance, Trouva. For a similar look, try the Luna Sapphire tile, Bert & May



MAIN BEDROOM
**As part of the renovation, the unused attic was transformed into a hotel-style sleep space with open-plan en suite complete with character bath.**
Maison de Vacances cushion, Made in Design. Duvet cover 309, Libeco Home. Try H&M Home for a similar vase



for the refit. Using a raft of loyal and local craftspeople and technicians, the work took six months to complete and involved the opening up of load-bearing walls, the addition of a TV room and the fitting of underfloor heating throughout. 'The biggest challenge of the project was accessing the site. Logistically that can be a bit of a gymkhana event here in the historic heart of Megève!' says Hélène. Once the structural work was completed, the interior could be more carefully considered.

Each storey has seen a redesign that uses a different theme, inspired by the colours of the natural alpine environment. 'We've used green in the basement ski room, white and grey for the day area, which incorporates living, dining and kitchen, and blue for the main bedroom en suite,' says Hélène. 'We lightened the colour palette as much as possible and favoured transparent materials throughout, too, to encourage a brighter feel.'

The house has come together rather beautifully, and while the overall finished look is fresh and contemporary, a careful balance between retaining the old and introducing the new has been seamlessly accomplished, precisely as its owners wished. 'Accompanying our clients on a renovation journey requires trust, experience and expertise but, also, audacity and originality,' says Hélène. 'The most satisfying aspect of this project is definitely the end result.'

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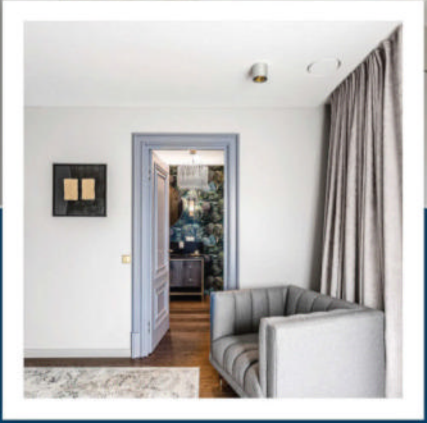

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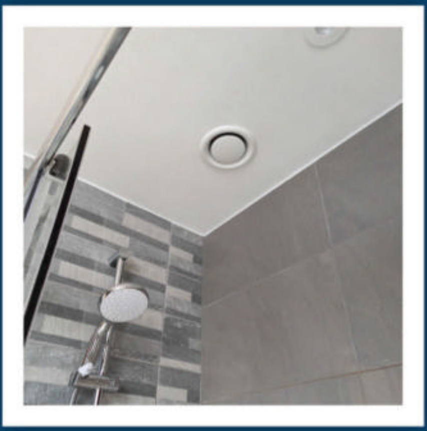

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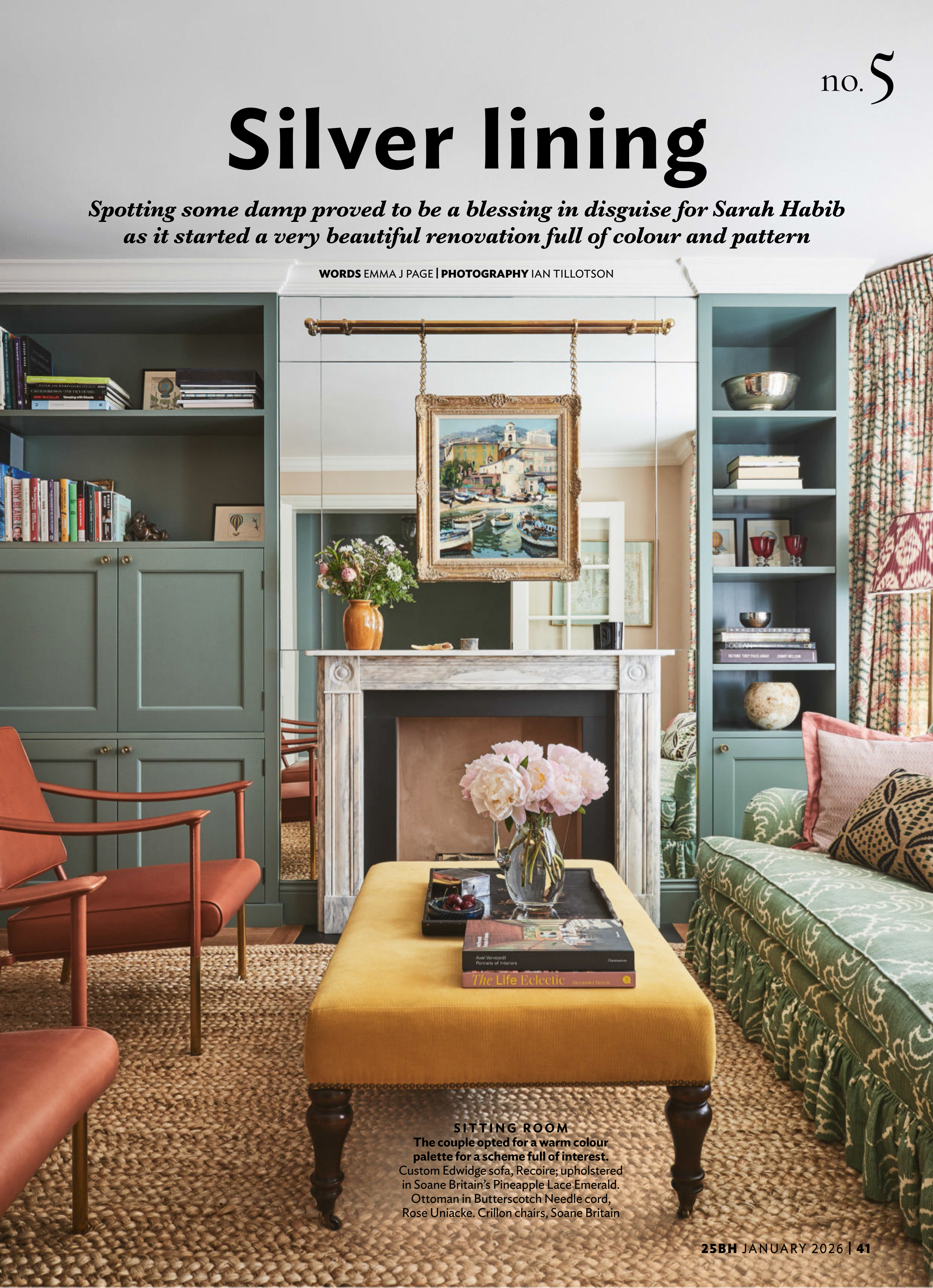
# Silver lining

*Spotting some damp proved to be a blessing in disguise for Sarah Habib as it started a very beautiful renovation full of colour and pattern*

**WORDS** EMMA J PAGE | **PHOTOGRAPHY** IAN TILLOTSON



SITTING ROOM
**The couple opted for a warm colour palette for a scheme full of interest.** Custom Edwidge sofa, Recoire; upholstered in Soane Britain's Pineapple Lace Emerald. Ottoman in Butterscotch Needle cord, Rose Uniacke. Crillon chairs, Soane Britain

When Sarah Habib and her partner Nicholas started a new life chapter together, high on the list was finding a cosy pied-à-terre in their favourite part of west London. Before long, an apartment came up in a classic stucco-fronted building and despite being located on the lower ground floor, it benefitted from well-proportioned rooms and plenty of light at the front and rear.

'As a result, we envisaged giving the place a simple lick of paint and moving right in,' says Sarah, director of a skincare brand. 'But once we got the keys and spotted some damp, we knew that we might be in for an overhaul.'

Well-versed in decoration, thanks to her interior designer sister Lulu Lytle, co-founder of Soane Britain, and having grown up with parents who filled their rectory home with fabrics and art, Sarah knew she wanted to create a space full of colour and personality. 'Lulu had recommended working with interior designer Jess Daw previously,' says Sarah. 'We share a similar creative vision and I knew she would come up with a host of clever ideas.'

The apartment was taken back to brick, which gave the couple the opportunity to rationalise the layout, removing later additions like awkward pipework, shifting walls, sometimes just by inches, squaring off the archway between sitting room and hall and rejigging door placement to allow for optimum use of space. 'I knew we would need to embrace the limited light in the centre of the building,' says Jess. 'The default can sometimes be to play it safe and paint everything white, when actually colour and pattern can be your friend in tricky spaces. Luckily, Sarah was on side from the start. She was open to using wallpaper for example, in areas such as the bedrooms, which helped unify their potentially disjointed footprint.'

Within nine months, the former Airbnb had taken on the air of a family home in miniature. In the guest bedroom, the couple carved out a shower enclosure from a former cupboard, plus room for a compact basin. With six grown-up children between them, it was essential that this space felt self-contained. 'I especially wanted the guest room, which gives on to the garden, to be a place to linger,'

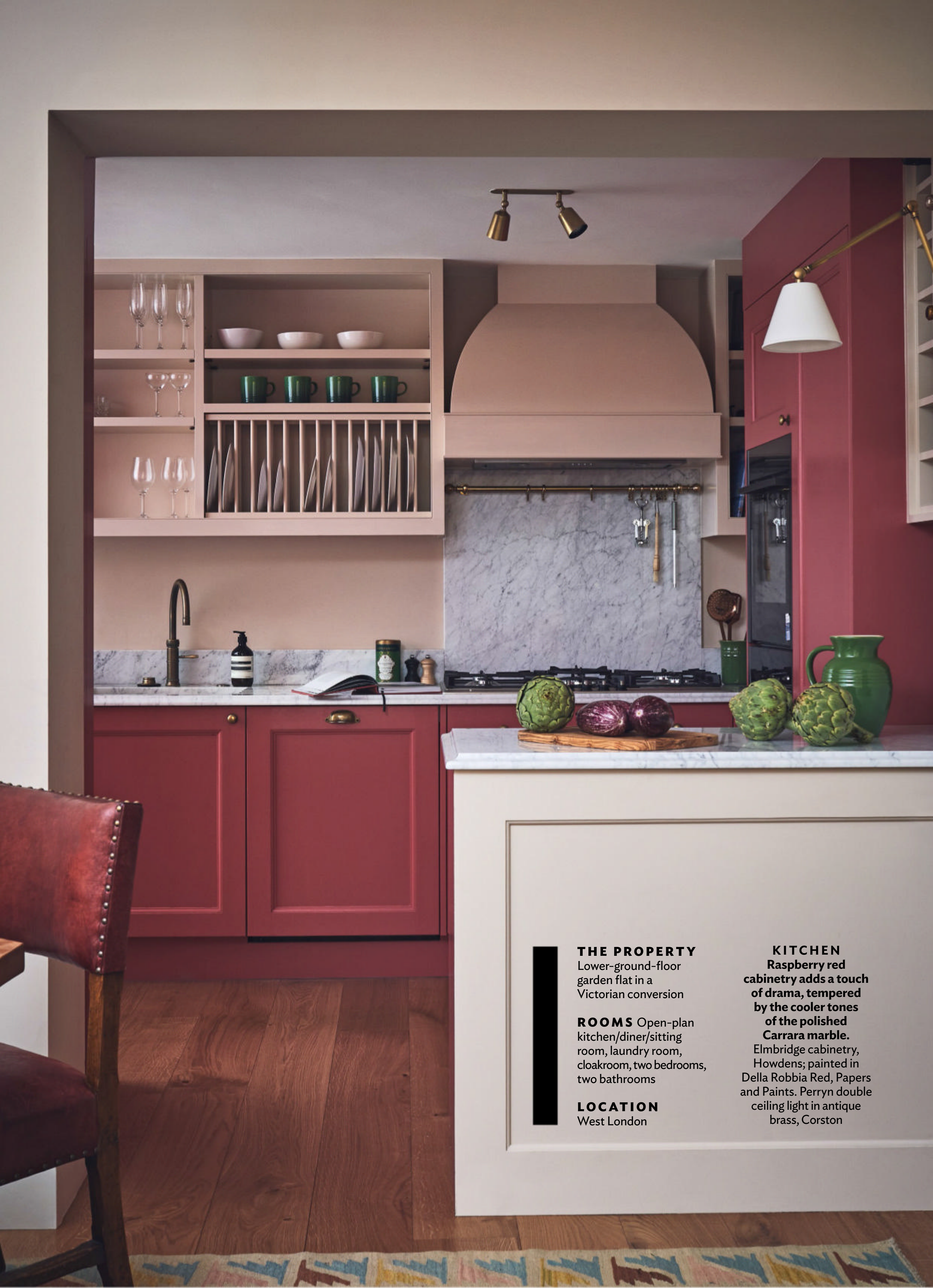
> 'Using two colours in the kitchen enhances its bespoke feel and gives it plenty of personality'

**SITTING ROOM**
**'We wanted to be able to entertain family and friends in elegant and inviting surroundings,' says Sarah.**
Blond woven jute rug, Emily's House. Joinery in Chappell Green, Farrow & Ball. Reclaimed fire surround, The Architectural Forum

KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND

**HALLWAY**
**Simple coat hooks on a painted board are both practical and pretty.**
Walls and ceiling in Persian, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint. Reclaimed floor tiles, Bert & May. Curtain in Three Stripes fabric in Green & Gold, Studio Atkinson

**DINING AREA**
**'The octagonal dining table was one of our first finds for the apartment and it works really well with the couple's existing dining chairs,' says Jess.**
Mouseman oak dining table, 8 Holland Street. Vintage rug, Emily's House



**THE PROPERTY** Lower-ground-floor garden flat in a Victorian conversion

**ROOMS** Open-plan kitchen/diner/sitting room, laundry room, cloakroom, two bedrooms, two bathrooms

**LOCATION** West London

**KITCHEN** **Raspberry red cabinetry adds a touch of drama, tempered by the cooler tones of the polished Carrara marble.** Elmbridge cabinetry, Howdens; painted in Della Robbia Red, Papers and Paints. Perryn double ceiling light in antique brass, Corston explains Sarah. To that end, Jess introduced a bold toile to cover the walls. Studded with animals and birds, it provides cohesion across both bedroom and shower area, aided by pops of yellow from the headboard and the zellige tiles. 'As this is the couple's city bolthole rather than their main home, we had the freedom to be a bit playful, which really helped these interiors come alive,' says Jess.

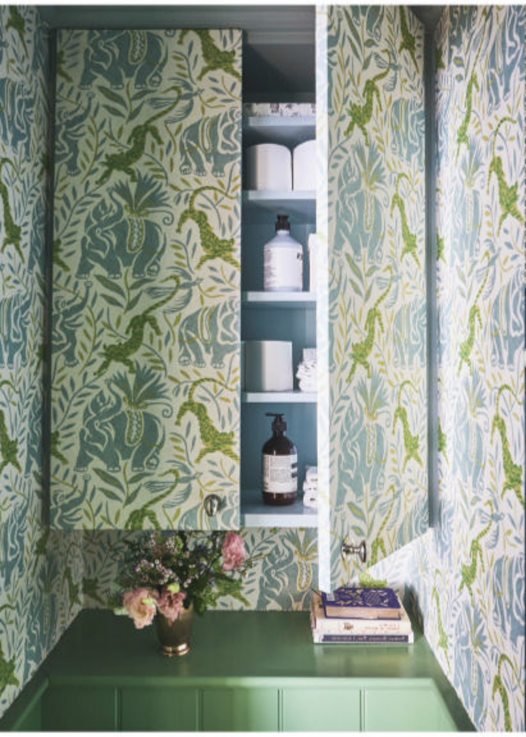
The reconfiguration afforded other clever additions too, such as a jewel-like cloakroom, carved from an understairs storage space and wrapped in a classic Christopher Farr paper, and a main bathroom that was reworked to accommodate both shower and bath. The main entrance, although 'not grand' according to Jess, now has a welcoming country house feel, thanks to sunshine yellow walls, a rich curtain fabric concealing a further storage room and reclaimed chequerboard flooring – cosily underheated for the comfort of Willow the whippet and Olive, a Jack Russell.

Perhaps the greatest triumph is the open-plan sitting room-cum-kitchen-diner, cleverly delineated so that the couple can relax, work, cook and entertain with ease. Jess added a pair of generous glazed double doors to zone this space from the hall and a new fireplace with a reclaimed marble surround, for warmth and definition. Generous joinery and a desk facilitates homeworking. 'The kitchen itself is quite compact, but the couple love to entertain, so we opted to keep the peninsula as it provides essential storage and is decorated in a way that helps it to sit as lightly as possible in the opening,' says Jess. 'Cabinetry painted in bold raspberry was Sarah's suggestion and although Nicholas took some persuading at first, it's become a real talking point.'

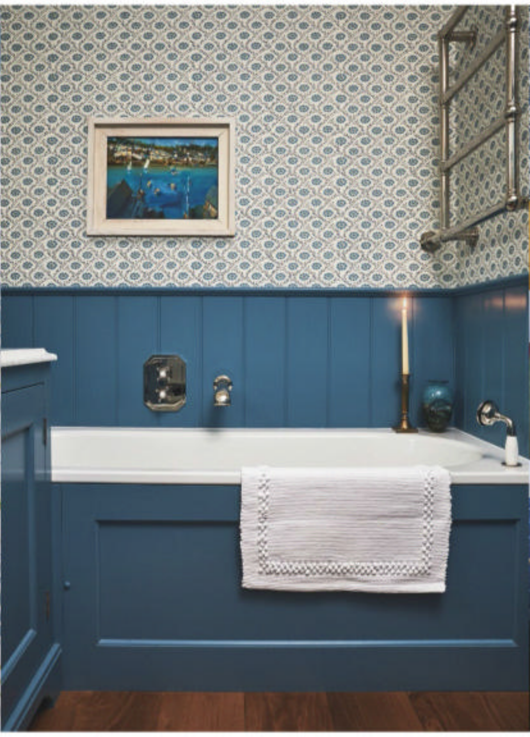
It's here that the couple cook together, producer-director Nicholas can work, and during winter evenings, both can cosy up to watch a film. 'What's lovely is that our home – which is quite compact – now feels spacious after a clever rejig,' says Sarah. 'We can seat eight at the dining table, have guests to stay over, or use the apartment as a bolthole for two. Next on the list is to plan a drinks party for friends. Most importantly, these schemes feel like a reflection of us. Arriving at the front door always lifts our hearts.'

*dawandco.co.uk*

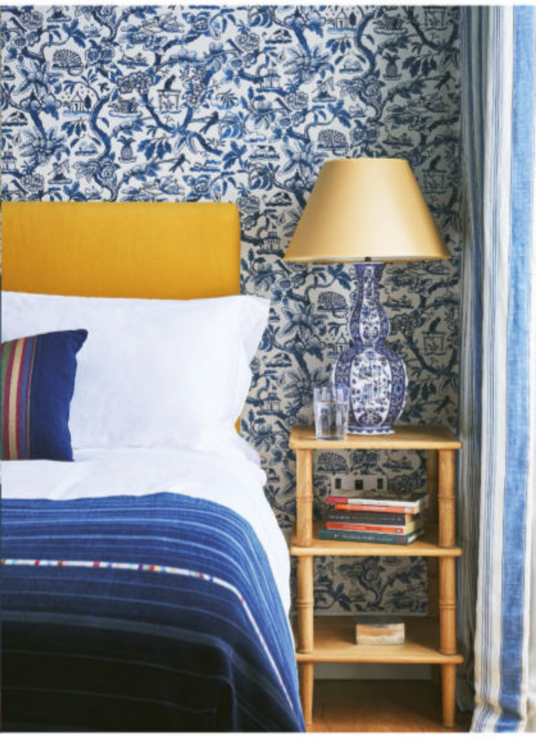
'Continuing the wallpaper on the storage in the cloakroom was a clever design decision as it makes the space feel streamlined'



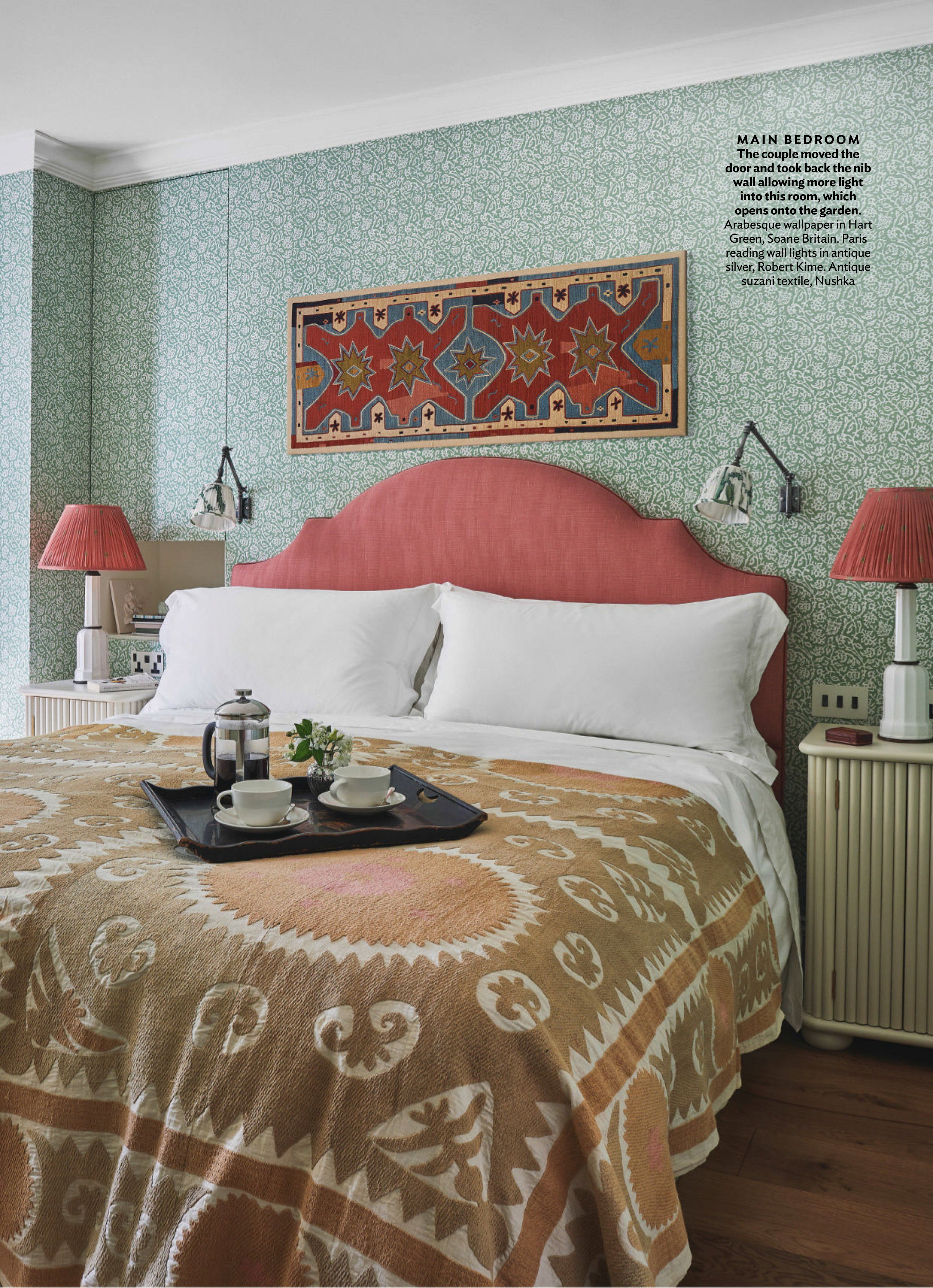
**CLOAKROOM**
**Wallpaper-wrapped cabinets conceal valuable storage space. 'We wanted to decorate playfully to create a surprising jewel box for guests to discover,' says Jess.**
La Jungle wallcovering in Aruba, Christopher Farr Cloth



**MAIN BATHROOM**
**This needed careful planning to achieve the arrangement that the couple needed.**
Floral Ogee wallpaper in Blue, Dado Atelier. Panelling and vanity in Azurite, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint. Belgravia brassware in polished nickel, Crosswater



**BEDROOM**
**A yellow headboard pops against the beautiful wallpaper.**
Toile de Joie wallpaper in Indigo, Chelsea Textiles. Throw, Nushka. Bamboo side table in Natural Oak, Alfred Newall

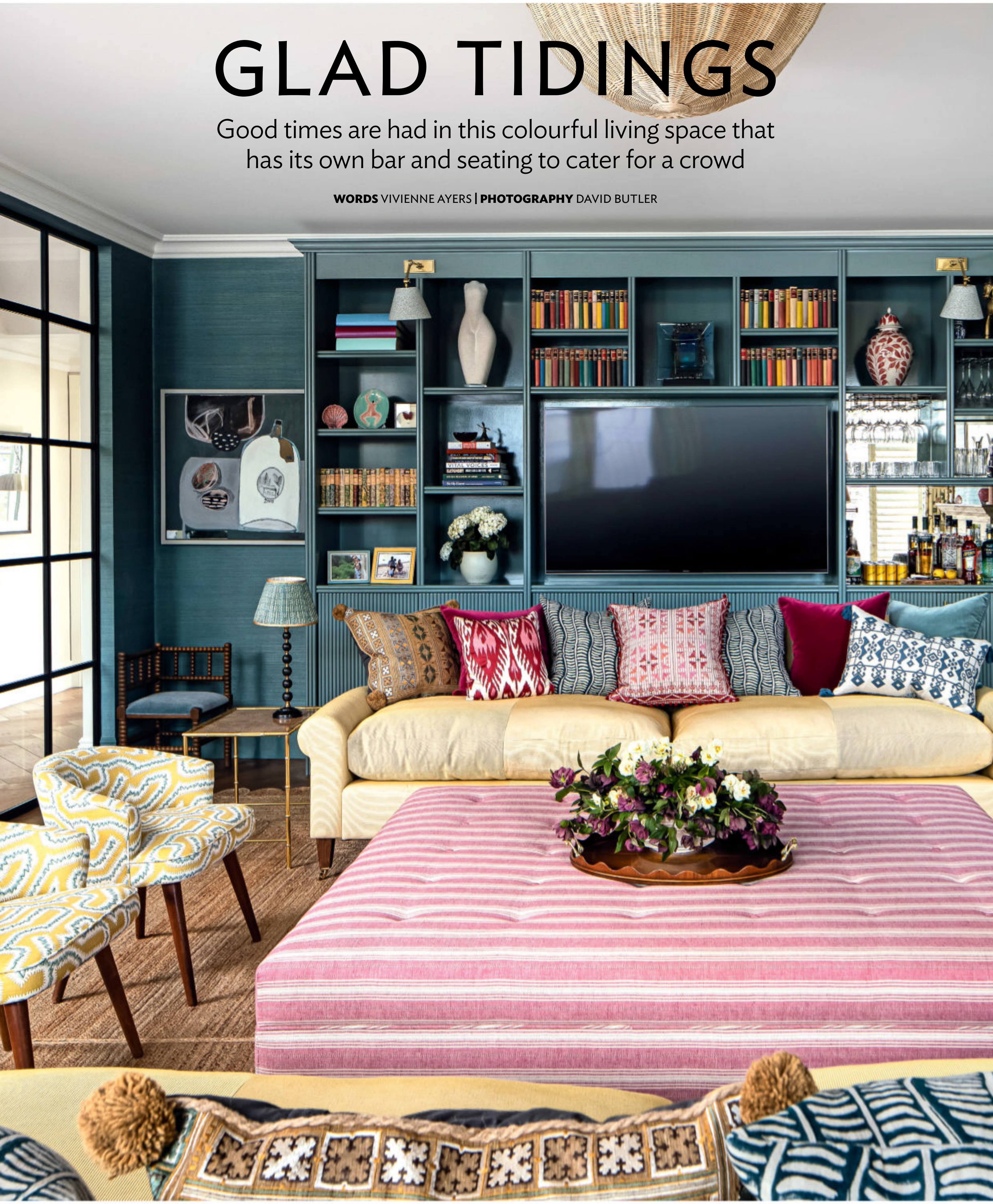


**MAIN BEDROOM**
**The couple moved the door and took back the nib wall allowing more light into this room, which opens onto the garden.** Arabesque wallpaper in Hart Green, Soane Britain. Paris reading wall lights in antique silver, Robert Kime. Antique suzani textile, Nushka

# GLAD TIDINGS

Good times are had in this colourful living space that has its own bar and seating to cater for a crowd

**WORDS** VIVIENNE AYERS | **PHOTOGRAPHY** DAVID BUTLER



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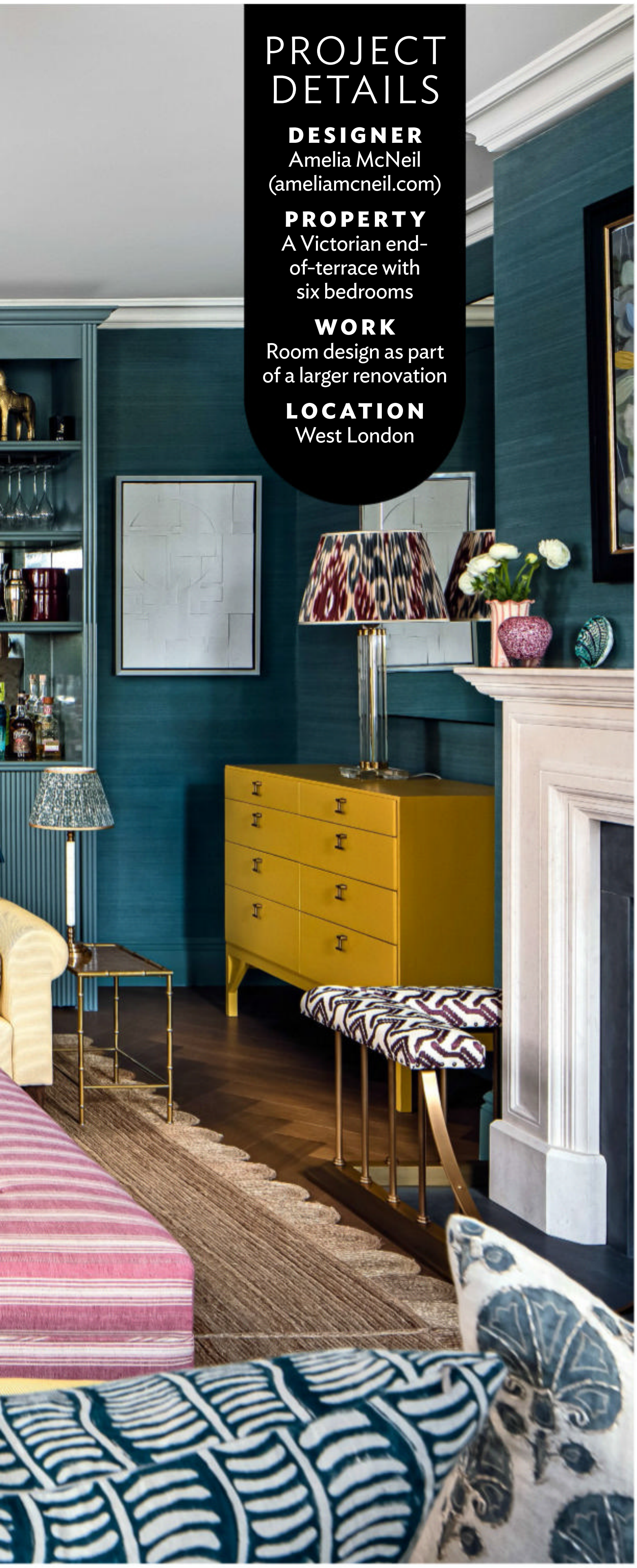


## PROJECT DETAILS

**DESIGNER**
Amelia McNeil
(ameliamcneil.com)

**PROPERTY**
A Victorian end-of-terrace with six bedrooms

**WORK**
Room design as part of a larger renovation

**LOCATION**
West London

New life was breathed into this Victorian home when the owners commissioned interior designer Amelia McNeil to showcase colour and pattern. 'The sitting room was to be used for entertaining, but also everyday living,' says Amelia.

### 1 SIZE & SCALE

A side return increased the width of the house and benefited this room. Because of the size of the space, layout and furniture were key. 'Despite the scale of the room, the couple wanted it to feel cosy. We were determined to ensure the space was used,' says Amelia. Generous sofas provide plenty of seating, as well as helping to fill the room, while an oversized ottoman was made bigger than usual. 'We wanted the ottoman to be somewhere one could perch when entertaining,' says Amelia. 'This room is designed to be as social as possible, with the maximum amount of seating.'

### 2 STYLISH STORAGE

The bespoke joinery houses a built-in bar and integrated fridge, making it practical for entertaining. 'We felt a mix of books and decorative objects helped distract from the television and bring further character to the room,' says Amelia. 'We deliberately went for quite a dark colour on the joinery to avoid the TV standing out too much because it needed to be quite big with the viewing distances in mind.'

### 3 GLASS ACT

'We worked with Perla to design a wall and doors of steel-framed glazing that opened up the space, created drama when entering the house and allowed for the drawing room to be closed off at night, which made the space much cosier,' says Amelia.

### 4 ALCOVE SOLUTIONS

Symmetry was created with the alcoves on either side of the fireplace for maximum impact. 'The mirrors brought an elegance to the space, and we felt they worked well with the chest of drawers,' says Amelia.

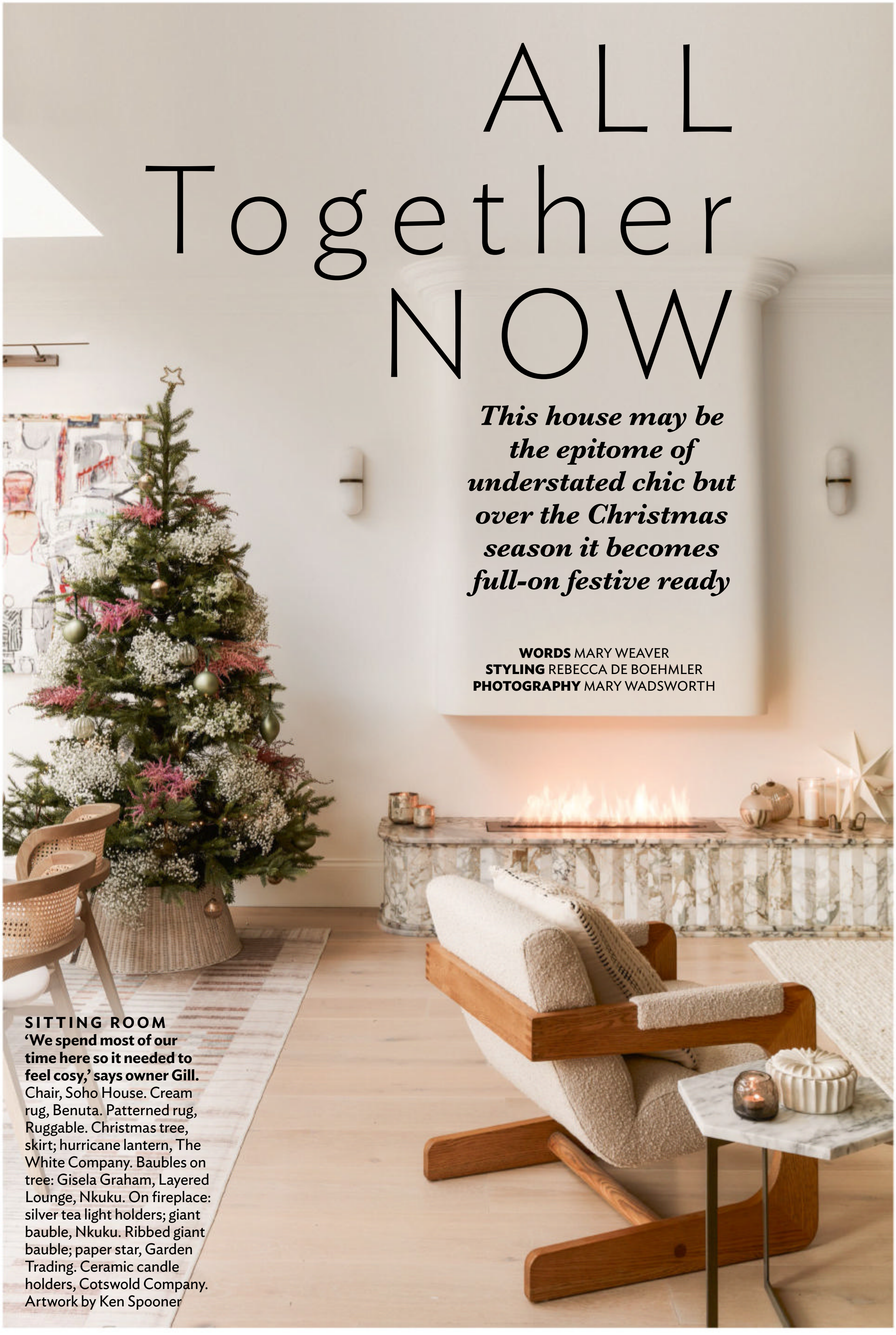
### COLOUR CONFIDENCE

**'We didn't want the joinery to feel too imposing in the space and so we matched the colour to the wallpaper,' says Amelia. 'This shade then provided a great backdrop for the pops of colour from the fabrics and artwork in the space. We loved the drama of the yellow chest of drawers against the blue backdrop of the wallpaper.'**
Textured silk **wallcovering**, Phillip Jeffries. Bespoke **sofa** upholstered in Ottoman Stripe, Soane Britain. Bespoke **ottoman**, upholstered in Marmaris Reversible Stripe in Petra Pink, Susan Deliss. **Armchairs** in Moorish Maze in Pyrite, Rapture & Wright. **Mirrors**, Fiona McDonald. **Chest of drawers**, Chelsea Textiles

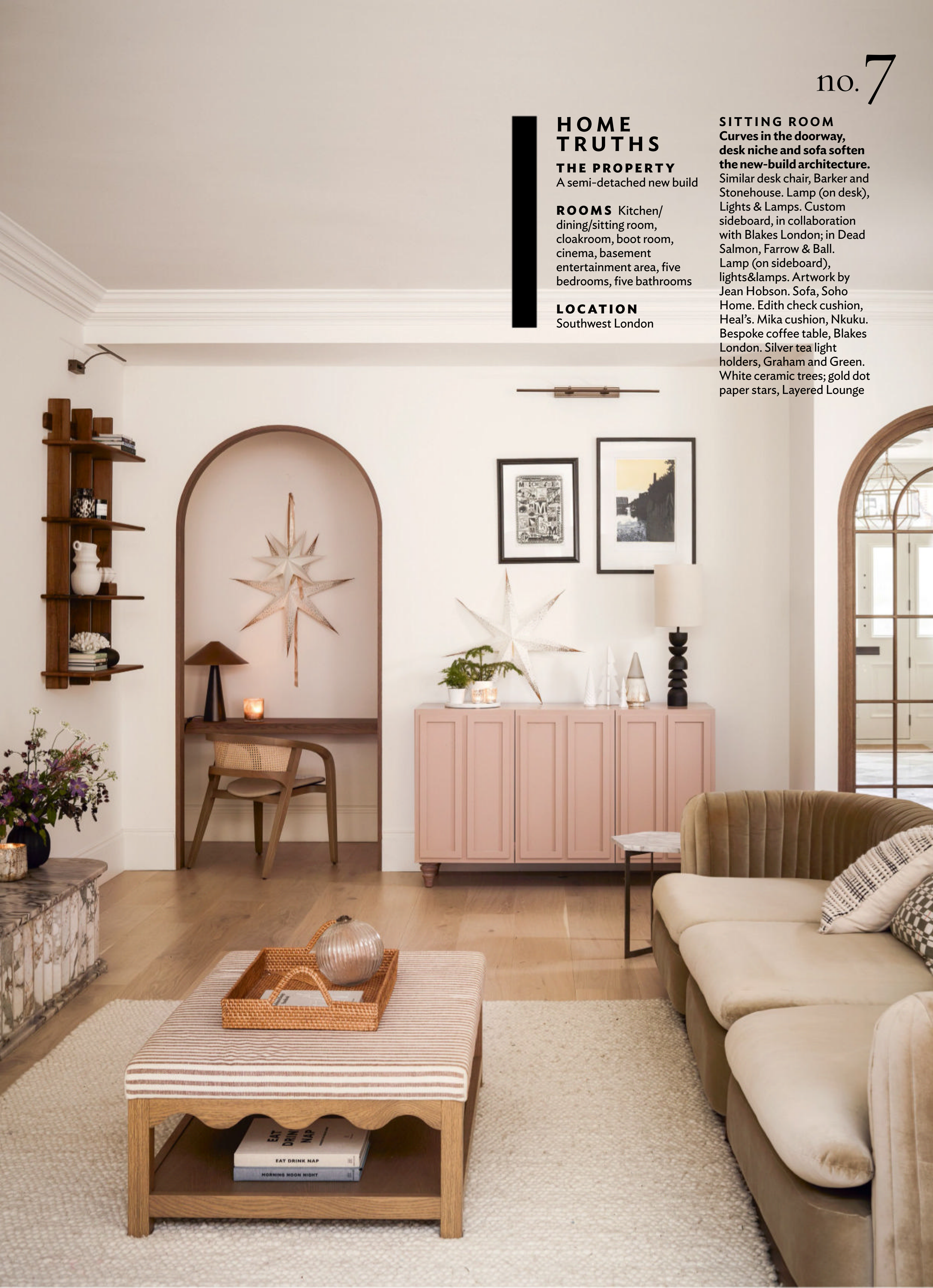
# ALL Together NOW

***This house may be the epitome of understated chic but over the Christmas season it becomes full-on festive ready***

**WORDS** MARY WEAVER
**STYLING** REBECCA DE BOEHMLER
**PHOTOGRAPHY** MARY WADSWORTH



**SITTING ROOM**
**'We spend most of our time here so it needed to feel cosy,' says owner Gill.** Chair, Soho House. Cream rug, Benuta. Patterned rug, Ruggable. Christmas tree, skirt; hurricane lantern, The White Company. Baubles on tree: Gisela Graham, Layered Lounge, Nkuku. On fireplace: silver tea light holders; giant bauble, Nkuku. Ribbed giant bauble; paper star, Garden Trading. Ceramic candle holders, Cotswold Company. Artwork by Ken Spooner



no. 7

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** A semi-detached new build

**ROOMS** Kitchen/dining/sitting room, cloakroom, boot room, cinema, basement entertainment area, five bedrooms, five bathrooms

**LOCATION** Southwest London

**SITTING ROOM**
**Curves in the doorway, desk niche and sofa soften the new-build architecture.** Similar desk chair, Barker and Stonehouse. Lamp (on desk), Lights & Lamps. Custom sideboard, in collaboration with Blakes London; in Dead Salmon, Farrow & Ball. Lamp (on sideboard), lights&lamps. Artwork by Jean Hobson. Sofa, Soho Home. Edith check cushion, Heal's. Mika cushion, Nkuku. Bespoke coffee table, Blakes London. Silver tea light holders, Graham and Green. White ceramic trees; gold dot paper stars, Layered Lounge

When you've got a large house, it would be remiss not to go big on Christmas. 'We had only just moved in last December but we had three trees – in the hall, the living room and the basement entertainment space – so I guess we'll do the same this year,' laughs Gill Martin who, together with husband Jonny, created this characterful home which, hard to believe, is actually a new build. Last year, with the paint just dry, they invited 20 family members for the festivities. 'Yes, it will be the same this year,' she says, 'but now we're happily ensconced, hopefully less stress, more fun.'

It's rare, especially in urban southwest London, that you get the chance to build your own home, but Jonny, a developer, tracked down this plot in a street of unusually mixed dwellings. 'It took two years to get permissions, dig out the basement and build this, which is actually a semi, plus a mirror-image house next door, which we sold,' says Gill.

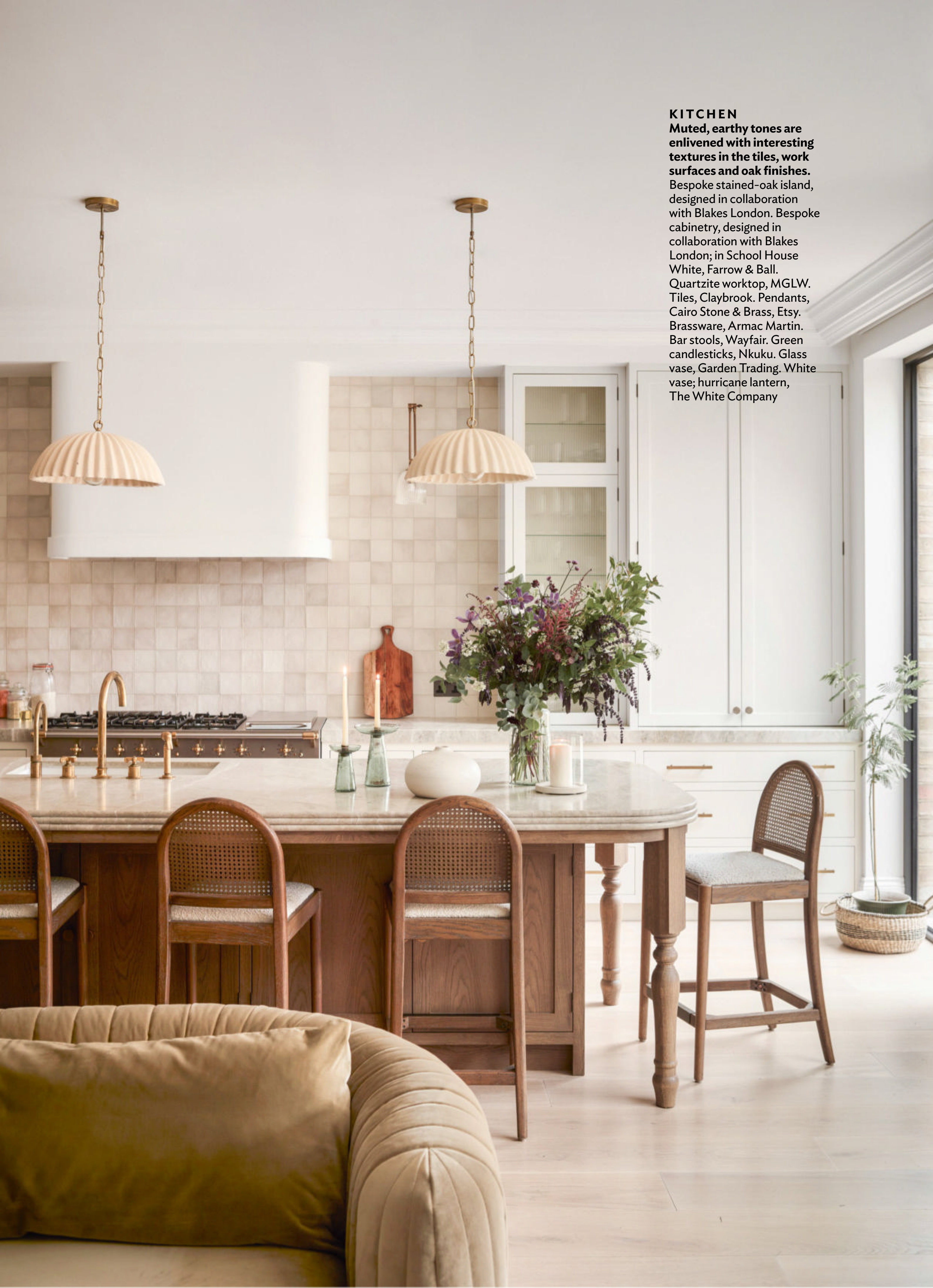
Prior to this they had lived locally in a Victorian terrace, bought 10 years ago, which gave them their first taste of working together. 'Jonny did the architectural side and I did the interiors,' says Gill, who was previously a lawyer but who had a passion for design. She learnt 'on the job' and worked on further joint projects before switching careers to interiors after their daughter Lexi was born.

For this house, they took their inspiration from the design language of Californian homes – all neutral colours

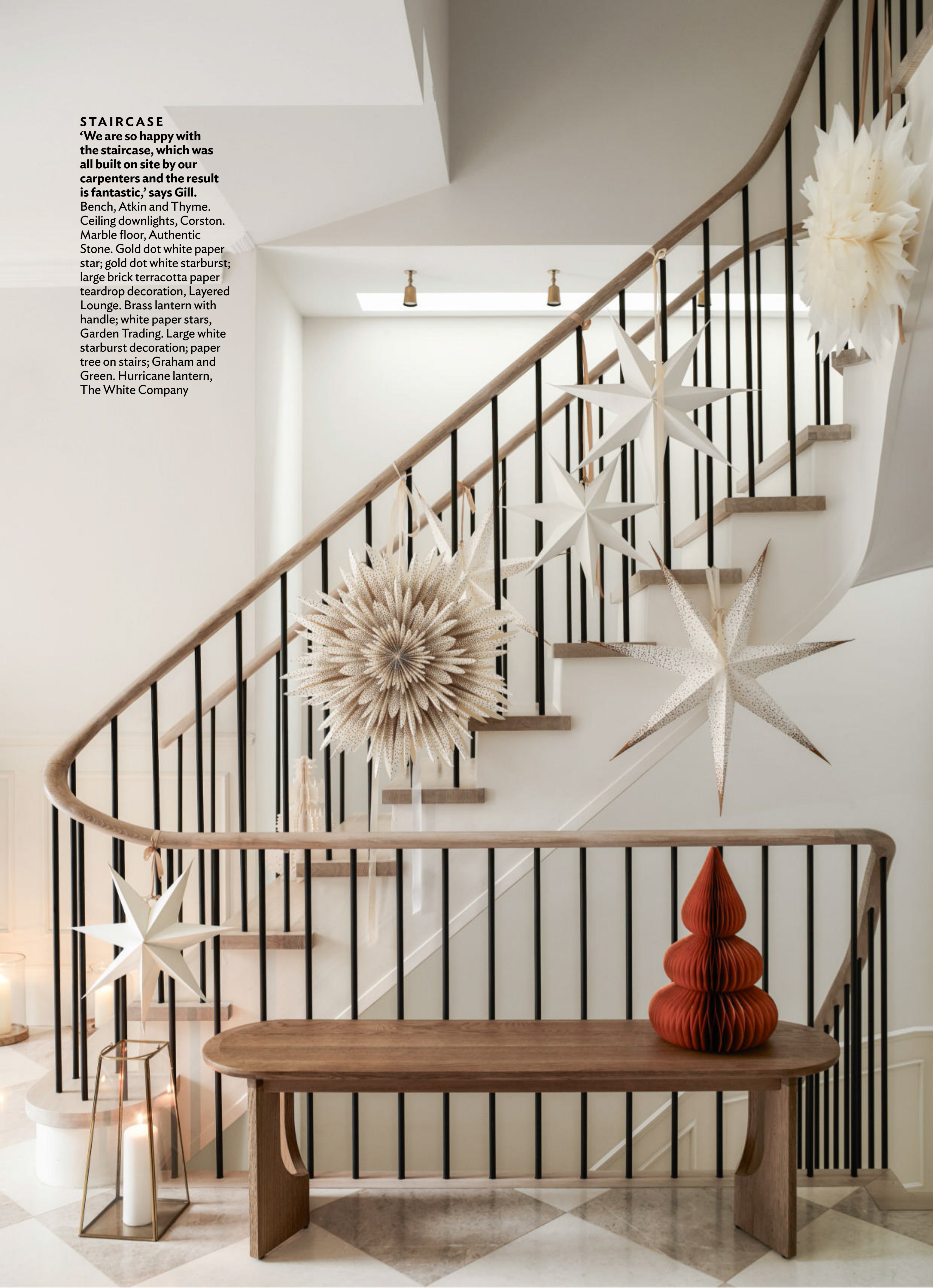
**SITTING ROOM**
**The skylight floods the space with light.** Walls in Wimborne White, Farrow & Ball. Tray, La Redoute. On tray: Dapple tea light holder, LSA. Silver tea light holders, Graham and Green. Bespoke dining table, in collaboration with Blakes London. Similar dining chairs, Barker and Stonehouse

**HALLWAY**
**The arched mirror echoes the doors into the living area.** Mirror, Soho Home. Gold dot star; green and white ceramic trees, Layered Lounge. White Christmas trees; small brass lantern, Garden Trading. Bespoke console in collaboration with Blakes London

'We knew the tones and the colour palette we wanted, just simple and light, but warm – it had to feel cosy, like a real home'



**KITCHEN**
**Muted, earthy tones are enlivened with interesting textures in the tiles, work surfaces and oak finishes.** Bespoke stained-oak island, designed in collaboration with Blakes London. Bespoke cabinetry, designed in collaboration with Blakes London; in School House White, Farrow & Ball. Quartzite worktop, MGLW. Tiles, Claybrook. Pendants, Cairo Stone & Brass, Etsy. Brassware, Armac Martin. Bar stools, Wayfair. Green candlesticks, Nkuku. Glass vase, Garden Trading. White vase; hurricane lantern, The White Company



**STAIRCASE**
**'We are so happy with the staircase, which was all built on site by our carpenters and the result is fantastic,' says Gill.** Bench, Atkin and Thyme. Ceiling downlights, Corston. Marble floor, Authentic Stone. Gold dot white paper star; gold dot white starburst; large brick terracotta paper teardrop decoration, Layered Lounge. Brass lantern with handle; white paper stars, Garden Trading. Large white starburst decoration; paper tree on stairs; Graham and Green. Hurricane lantern, The White Company

and natural materials, with rooms flowing into one another. 'We wanted to keep it simple, yet warm and characterful, with panelling, cladding and arched entrances; the antithesis to a new-build square box,' says Gill. For the all-important joinery, the couple collaborated with Blakes London to create the kitchen, bathrooms, storage and even some of the furniture. 'It was a great relationship – we would come up with ideas and they would make them happen,' says Gill.

Of course, the joy of being able to design a home for your lifestyle is that you get what you dream of: a grand hall ('our last one was poky and narrow'); a comfy living space in the kitchen ('we never used the separate one previously') and masses of storage. Not to mention a basement dedicated to entertainment – with a cinema, a piano, a snug filled with furniture that Lexi, now eight and their son, Kit, nine, can climb on and a grown-up bar straight out of a London club.

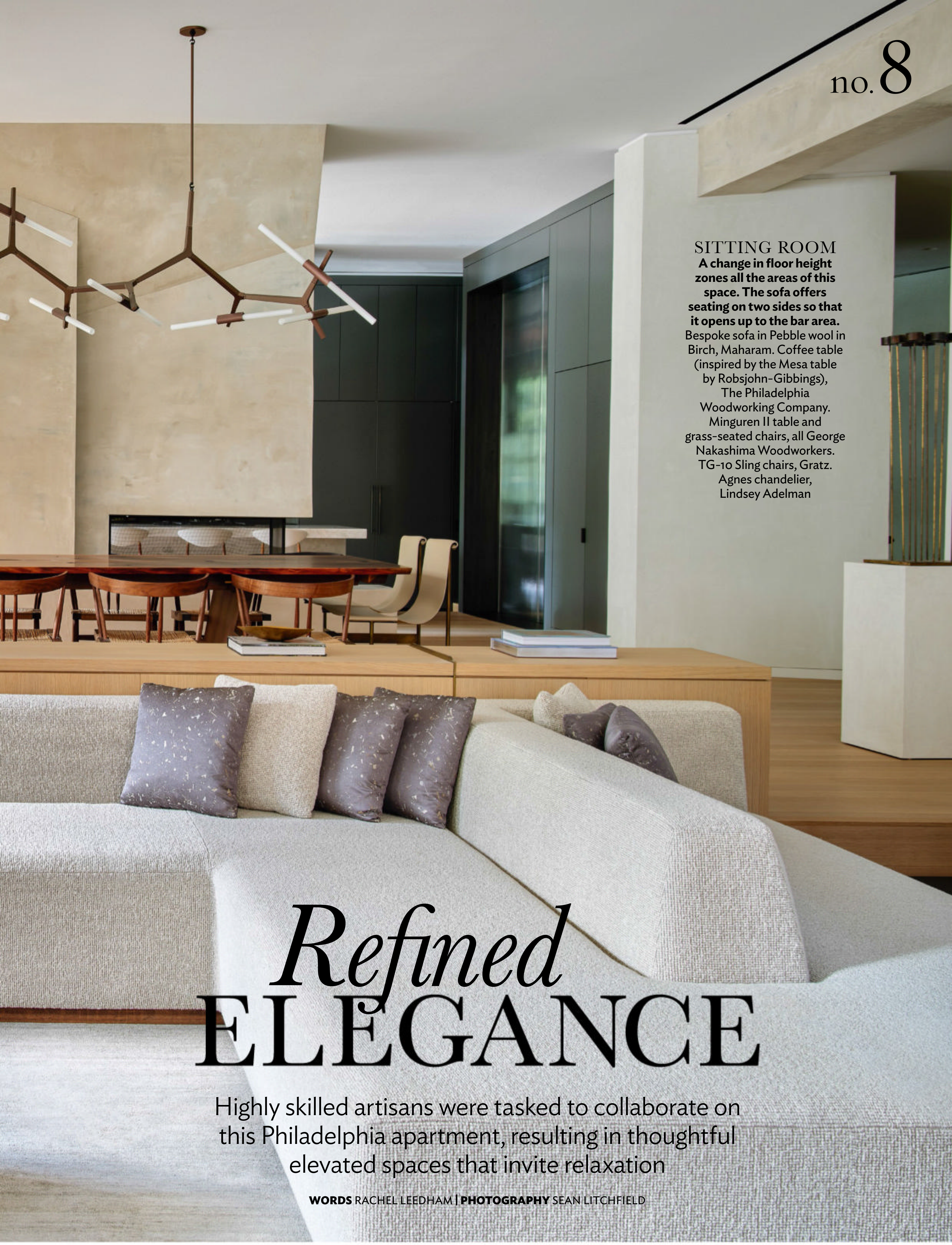
With Christmas just around the corner, the family are anticipating the celebrations to come. 'The children have stockings in the morning. Then it's breakfast with Buck's fizz; a bit of a walk, then presents,' says Gill. That's followed by nibbles – 'I love a prawn cocktail starter' – with dinner at four o'clock. After a little catnap, it's down to the basement for music. 'My husband's family are quite musical and my nephew plays guitar, so it's a lot of fun,' she adds. It sounds like the kind of celebration we can get on board with.

*blakeslondon.com; mascotbespoke.com; @sudbrooke_studio*

**MAIN BEDROOM**
**'We chose a palette of muted greens and neutrals; it's calming and peaceful,' says Gill.** Walls in Quiet, Bauwerk Colour. Bed, Soho Home. Cushions, Rise & Fall. Throw, Etsy. Bespoke burl wood table, in collaboration with Blakes London. Rug, Rugvista. Pendant; table lamp, Lights & Lamps

**BATHROOM**
**'Details such as the scallop-edged vanity and bobbin mirror make this feel cute and playful,' says Gill.** Wall light, Spark & Bell. Bespoke vanity and reeded bath surround, in collaboration with Blakes London; in Pink Ground, Farrow & Ball. Sink and bath taps, Waterworks. Bath, Bette. Artwork by Carla Llanos

'We were keen to introduce architectural details such as the arched doors and curves to add interest and balance out the modern elements'



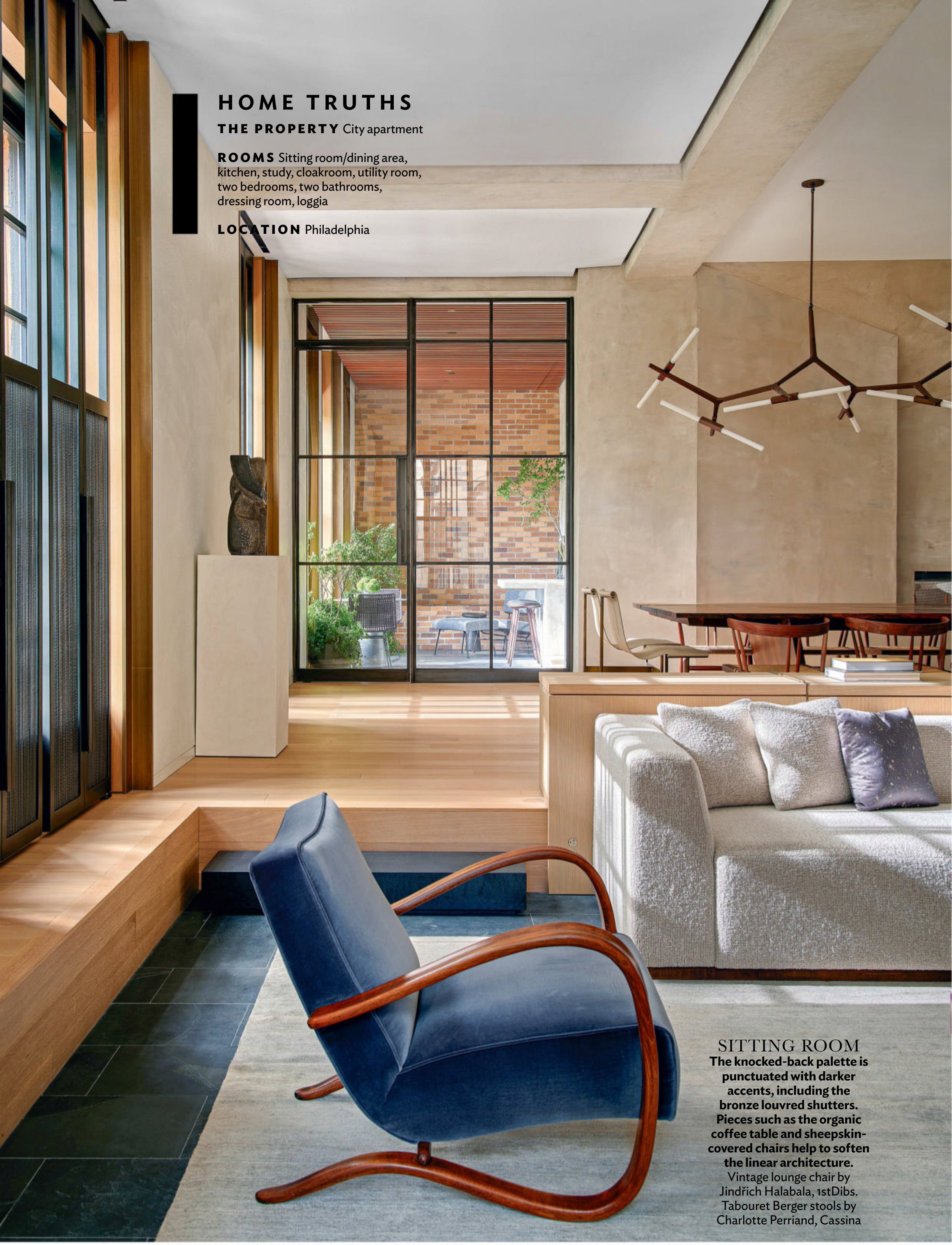
no. 8

SITTING ROOM
**A change in floor height zones all the areas of this space. The sofa offers seating on two sides so that it opens up to the bar area.** Bespoke sofa in Pebble wool in Birch, Maharam. Coffee table (inspired by the Mesa table by Robsjohn-Gibbings), The Philadelphia Woodworking Company. Minguren II table and grass-seated chairs, all George Nakashima Woodworkers. TG-10 Sling chairs, Gratz. Agnes chandelier, Lindsey Adelman

# *Refined* ELEGANCE

Highly skilled artisans were tasked to collaborate on this Philadelphia apartment, resulting in thoughtful elevated spaces that invite relaxation

**WORDS** RACHEL LEEDHAM | **PHOTOGRAPHY** SEAN LITCHFIELD



## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** City apartment

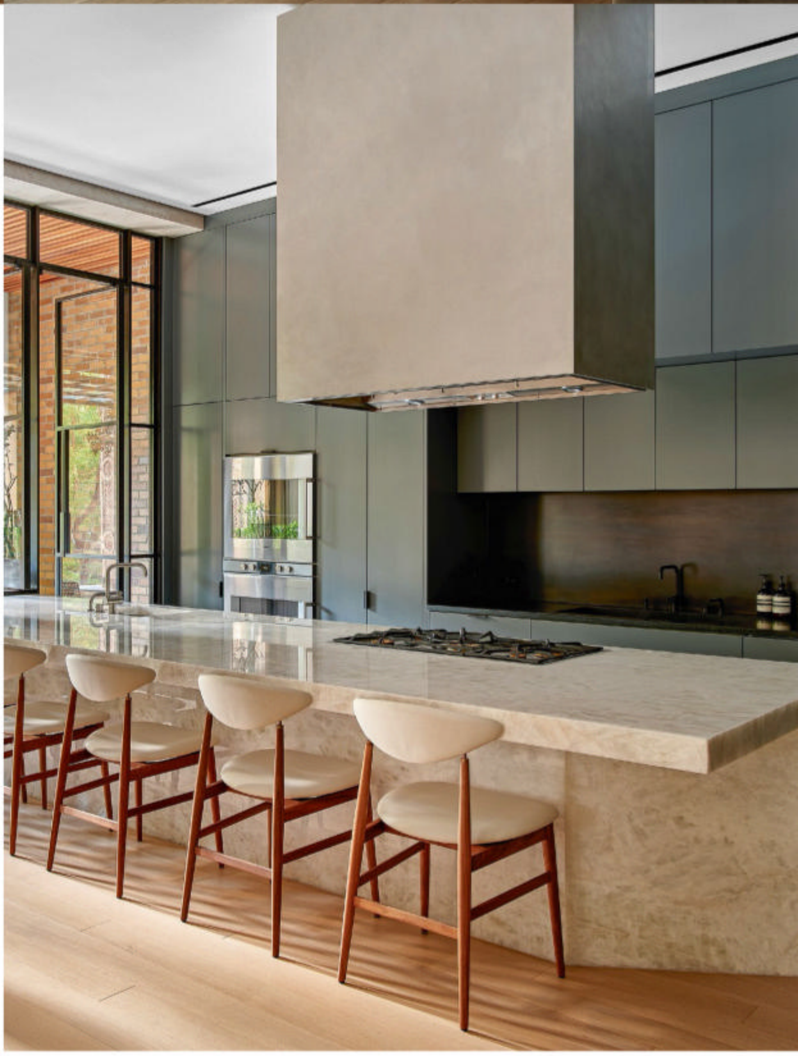
**ROOMS** Sitting room/dining area, kitchen, study, cloakroom, utility room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, dressing room, loggia

**LOCATION** Philadelphia

SITTING ROOM

**The knocked-back palette is punctuated with darker accents, including the bronze louvred shutters. Pieces such as the organic coffee table and sheepskin-covered chairs help to soften the linear architecture.** Vintage lounge chair by Jindřich Halabala, 1stDibs. Tabouret Berger stools by Charlotte Perriand, Cassina

KITCHEN
**The monolithic quartzite island has a luminosity that positively glows.** Gent dining chairs, Gubi. Cristallo Champagne quartzite countertop, BAS Stone. Tap, Vola. For vintage armchairs by Milo Baughman, try Vinterior. Armchairs in Soho Plush in Ink, Pollack

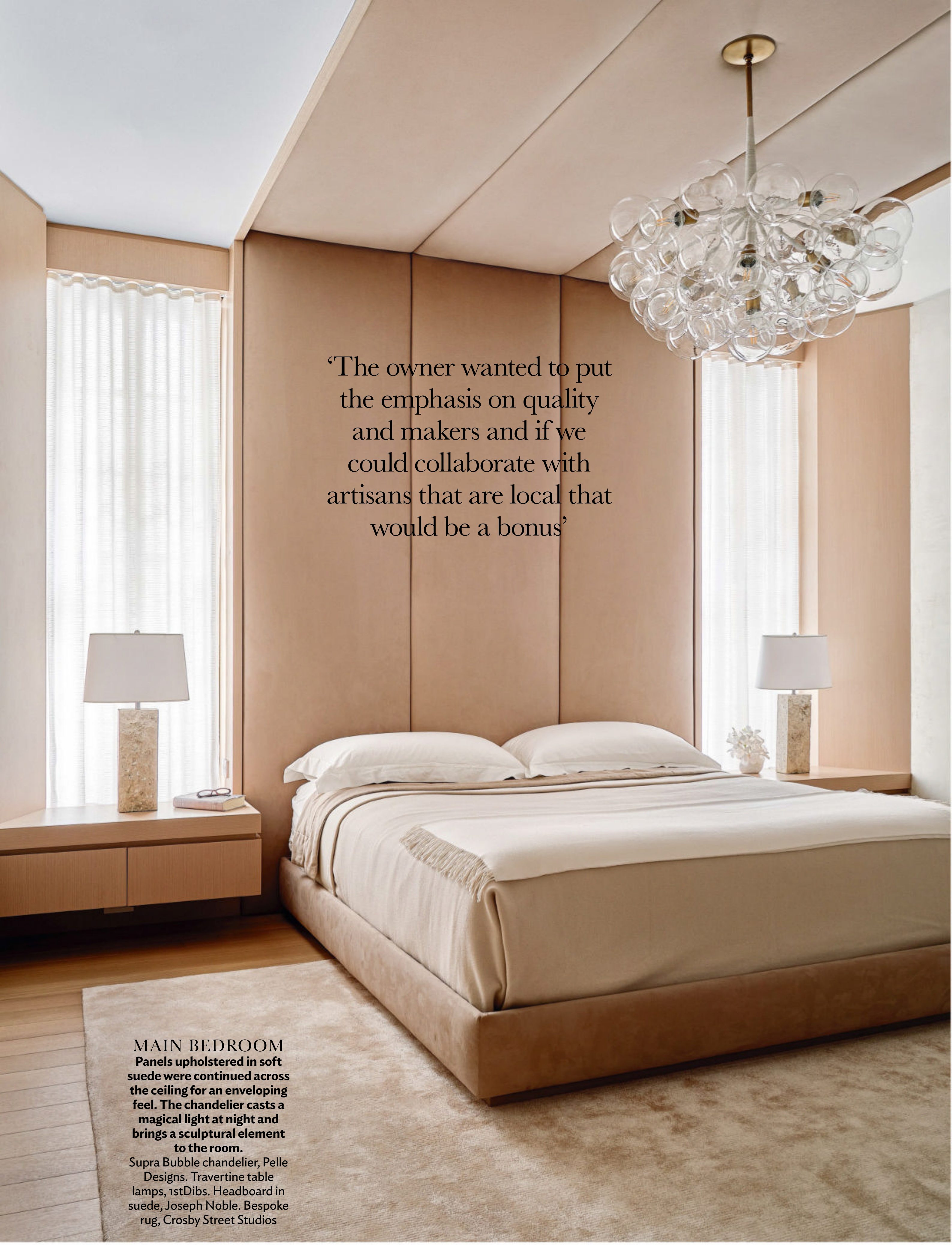


There is nothing that jars in this Philadelphia apartment. From the silky plaster walls to the plush handcrafted rugs; the cool metal doors to the tactile timbers and stones, every material in the home has been carefully considered to create a soothing aesthetic that belies its urban location. 'The owner asked us to design a sanctuary from the city, within the city,' recalls interior designer Alexii Friedman of Studio Friedman, who worked with Harris Ford of architectural practice Digsau to produce this refined home. She adds, 'The ground floor of the building houses one of the neighbourhood's buzziest restaurants, but you step into this flat and you immediately have a sense of calm.'

The owner, who has two grown-up children, was relocating from a large suburban home to this second-floor apartment. When she purchased the unit, it was a raw space with only its stud walls in place. 'This was a fresh start for her and she wanted her home to be a reflection of who she is and how she wanted to live now,' says Alexii. 'She gave us a blank canvas which, in my opinion, is every designer's ideal.'

The owner had bought one piece before she appointed Alexii: a walnut dining table by George Nakashima Woodworkers. This iconic mid-20th-century design, which celebrates the beauty of wood, was to prove the starting point for a project. 'She wanted to put the emphasis on quality and makers and if we could collaborate with artisans that are local, that would be a bonus,' says Alexii.

A local blacksmith, Warren Holzman, crafted the blackened steel doors as well as the bronze louvred shutters that lend privacy to the nine-foot-high windows. Warren also created the bar in the sitting room and the metal



> ‘The owner wanted to put the emphasis on quality and makers and if we could collaborate with artisans that are local that would be a bonus’

MAIN BEDROOM **Panels upholstered in soft suede were continued across the ceiling for an enveloping feel. The chandelier casts a magical light at night and brings a sculptural element to the room.** Supra Bubble chandelier, Pelle Designs. Travertine table lamps, 1stDibs. Headboard in suede, Joseph Noble. Bespoke rug, Crosby Street Studios

BATHROOM

**Travertine lends a sense of elegance to the bespoke vanity unit.**
Rousseau wall lights, Kelly Wearstler. Ocean Blue travertine, BAS Stone

shelves in the entrance hall which, together with sculptures mounted on plinths, give the feel of an art gallery. Behind the shelving is a wall of reeded glass: 'The apartment is large with just two of the façades featuring windows, so this helps pour light into the core of the home,' says Alexii.

The apartment's pièce de résistance is the loggia, which has retractable windows that open the space up to the leafy square. 'In summer, the tree canopies feel like they are an extension of the apartment,' says Alexii. 'We paid homage to the park with pieces such as the table and grass-seated chairs, as well as the dining room's branching chandelier.'

Pieces from the client's existing art collection were reframed to suit their new setting and teamed with modernist and contemporary artwork sourced by Alexii. 'When we visited Nakashima's studio in New Hope, his daughter gave us a tour and I was struck by his relationship with other artists such as Harry Bertoia and Ben Shahn, both of whom once lived in the area,' recalls Alexii, who tracked down one of Bertoia's sounding sculptures as well as a lithograph by Shahn. 'We wanted the pieces in this house to speak to each other,' she explains.

Indeed, the success of this project is all about its relationships, be it the connections between the artists or the close-knit team formed by the owner, interior designer and architect. 'It was a fantastic, thoughtful collaboration,' says Alexii, whose client agrees: 'We debated door knob types for hours and ended up not using door knobs at all!' she laughs. 'Most of the design decisions emerged from rigorous debates like this. I feel privileged to have had the time and space to engage with every detail of this design.'

*studiofriedman.com; digsau.com*

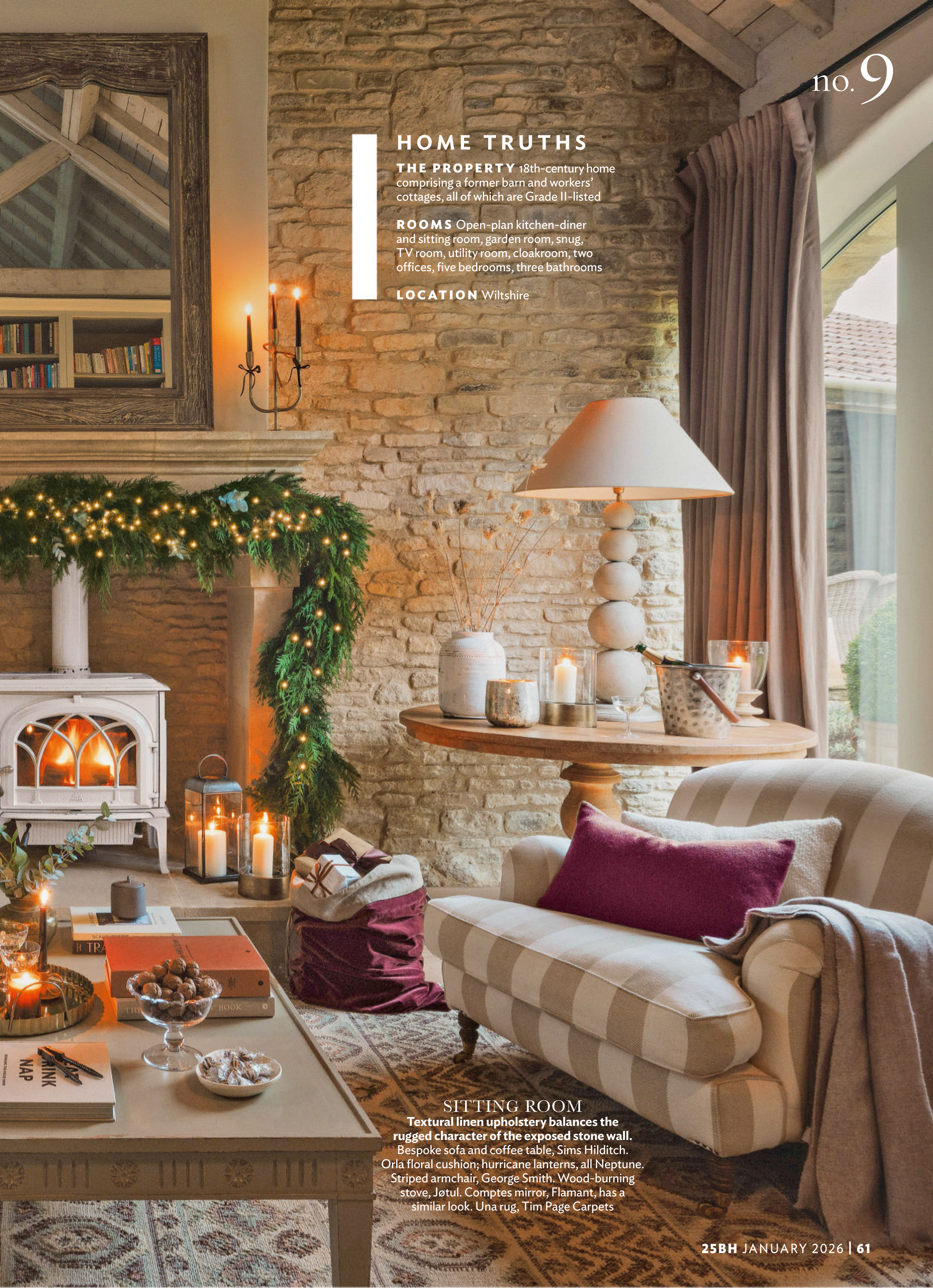
BEDROOM

**Visitors enjoy a stylish space with all the home comforts.**
Nelson Saucer Bubble pendant light, Herman Miller. Find a reproduction Pierre Jeanneret bench at Cassina. Swoon lounge chair, Fredericia. Chair in Linara in Alabaster, Romo. Serafina table, Arteriors

# Comfort & JOY

Emma Sims-Hilditch has infused her Cotswolds family home with character and warmth, making it the perfect backdrop for festive gatherings

**WORDS** RACHEL LEEDHAM | **PHOTOGRAPHY** MATTHEW HERITAGE & OLIVER GRAHAME



no. 9

## HOME TRUTHS

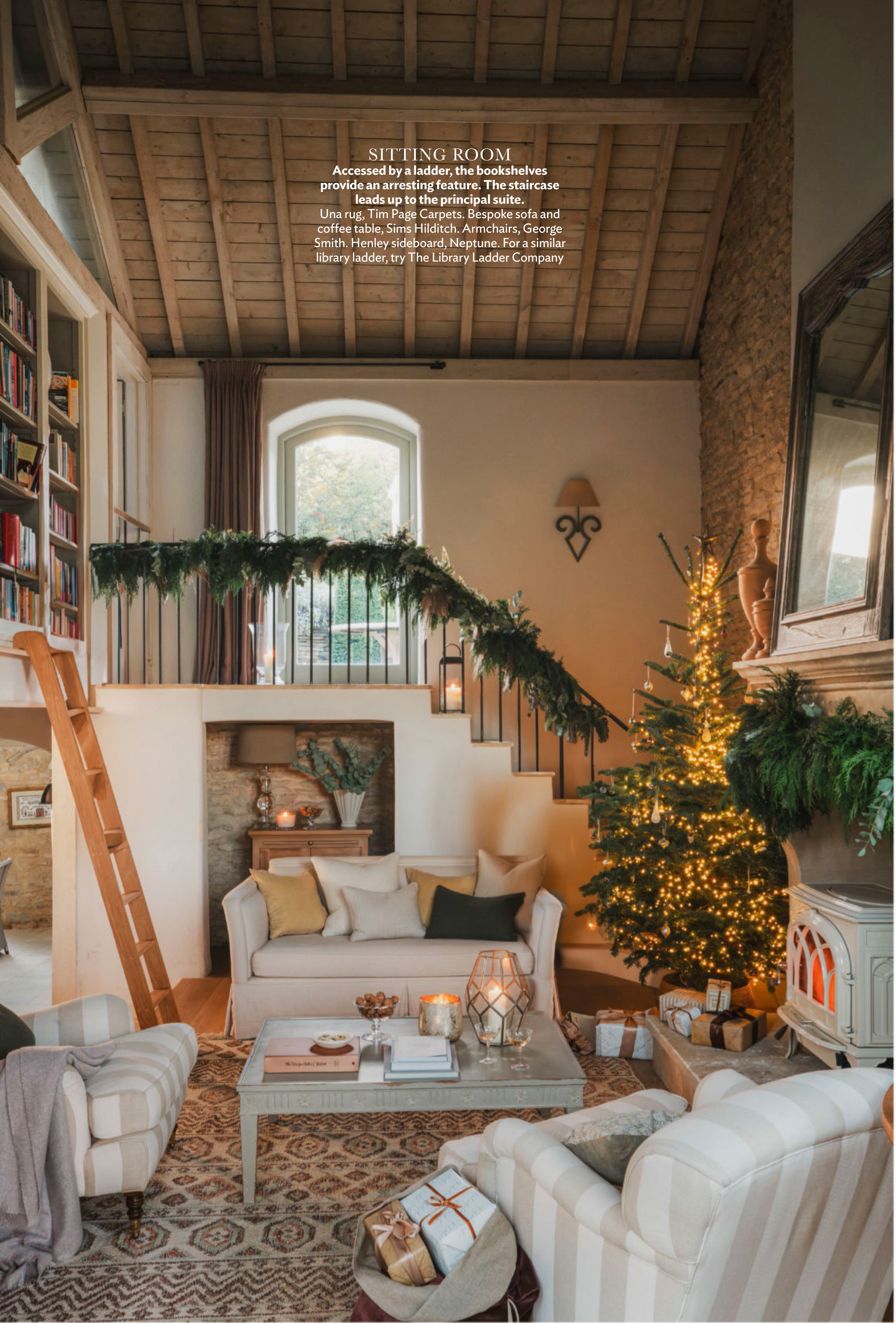
**THE PROPERTY** 18th-century home comprising a former barn and workers' cottages, all of which are Grade II-listed

**ROOMS** Open-plan kitchen-diner and sitting room, garden room, snug, TV room, utility room, cloakroom, two offices, five bedrooms, three bathrooms

**LOCATION** Wiltshire

SITTING ROOM

**Textural linen upholstery balances the rugged character of the exposed stone wall.** Bespoke sofa and coffee table, Sims Hilditch. Orla floral cushion; hurricane lanterns, all Neptune. Striped armchair, George Smith. Wood-burning stove, Jøtul. Comptes mirror, Flamant, has a similar look. Una rug, Tim Page Carpets



SITTING ROOM

**Accessed by a ladder, the bookshelves provide an arresting feature. The staircase leads up to the principal suite.**

Una rug, Tim Page Carpets. Bespoke sofa and coffee table, Sims Hilditch. Armchairs, George Smith. Henley sideboard, Neptune. For a similar library ladder, try The Library Ladder Company

When the village carol singers drop by the Cotswolds home of Emma and John Sims-Hilditch, they are treated to mulled wine in the covered loggia, where candlelight flickers in hurricane lamps. 'At this time of year, I love to think about how a house looks outside as well as inside,' says Emma. 'I'll always put a Christmas tree by a window, for example, so visitors can see it as they arrive, and I like to place a lantern by the front door to offer a welcoming glow.'

The couple have lived here since 1991, when they bought a row of three Grade II-listed workers' cottages dating from 1790. 'In the early 1900s, the cottages were converted into the village school, which closed in the 1970s – although we had the lovely caretaker living as a tenant in one of them until he died,' recounts Emma, who founded her interior design practice from the family kitchen table. John also launched his business here, creating the kitchen design, furniture and homeware company Neptune, where Emma still serves as creative founder. 'I ran up John's first sample hammock on my sewing machine at the very same table we use today,' she laughs.

In 2007, with three children and two growing businesses, the couple had the chance to acquire the adjacent dilapidated barn. 'We transformed it into an open-plan kitchen and living space, digging down to create the kitchen so we could place our bedroom above it,' explains Emma. 'We were inspired by a Belgian book, *Living With Reclaimed Materials*, and went on a research trip to explore Belgium's salvage and

**'WE WERE INSPIRED BY OUR TRAVELS AROUND EUROPE AND IN PARTICULAR OUR LOVE OF PROVENCE'**

LOGGIA

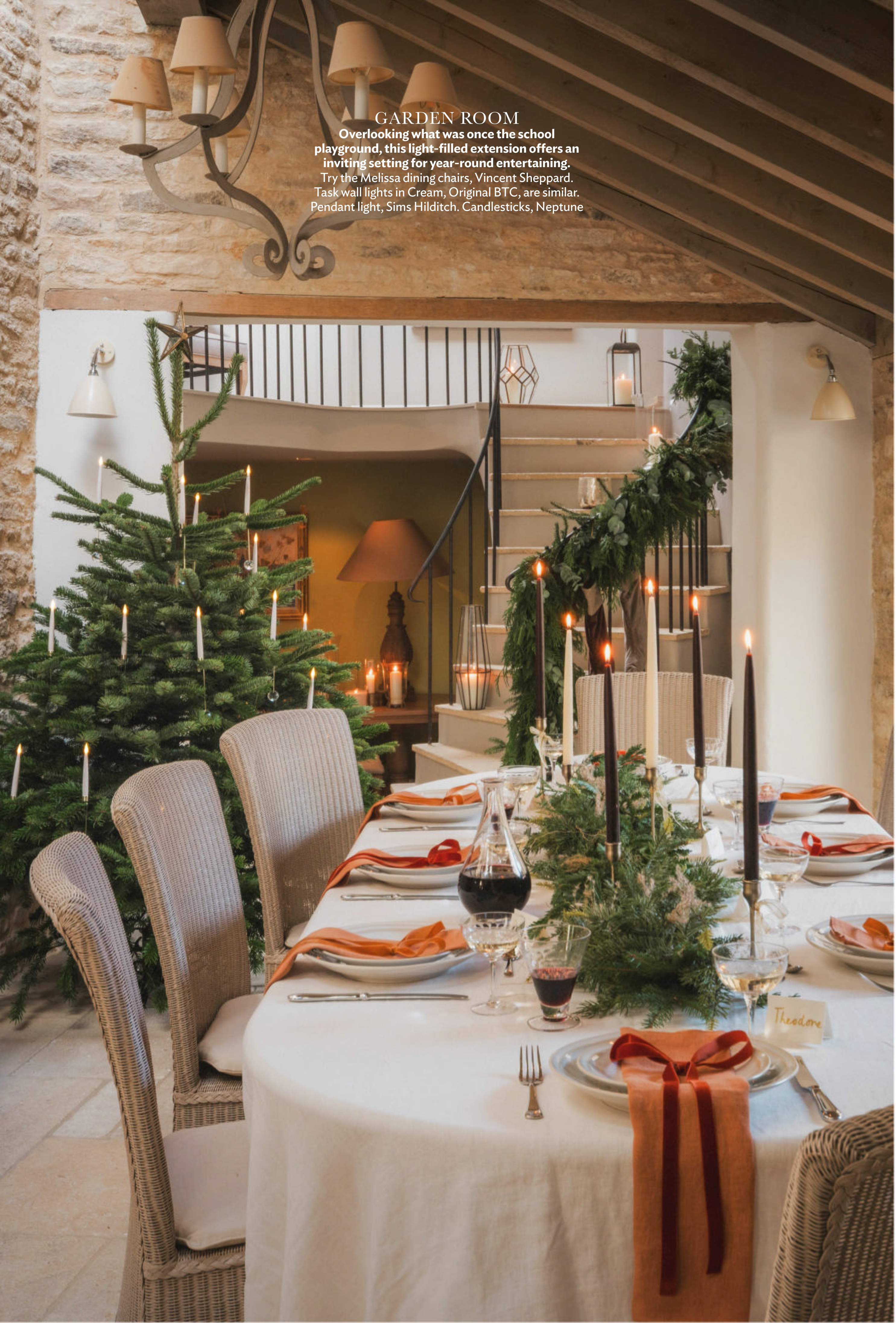
**Visible from the sitting room, the loggia is dressed with branches and candlelight for a warm, atmospheric effect.**

Try the Stanway carver chair, Neptune. Neptune has similar lanterns, too. Floor tiles, Lubelska

GARDEN ROOM

**A simple fir garland teamed with flickering candlelight creates an effortlessly festive centrepiece.**

Candlesticks, Neptune. Try the Victorine linen napkins in Chilli Pepper, La Redoute



GARDEN ROOM

**Overlooking what was once the school playground, this light-filled extension offers an inviting setting for year-round entertaining.** Try the Melissa dining chairs, Vincent Sheppard. Task wall lights in Cream, Original BTC, are similar. Pendant light, Sims Hilditch. Candlesticks, Neptune reclamation yards. It opened our eyes to how old materials could bring authenticity to a new project.'

The barn's ancient stone wall was rebuilt using reclaimed stone, while rolled steel joists were concealed within chamfered Douglas Fir beams. A striking fireplace, carved by a local stonemason from limestone imported from Provence, brings a sense of grandeur. 'We realised that the limestone there was remarkably similar to the pale honeyed tones of our local stone,' Emma explains.

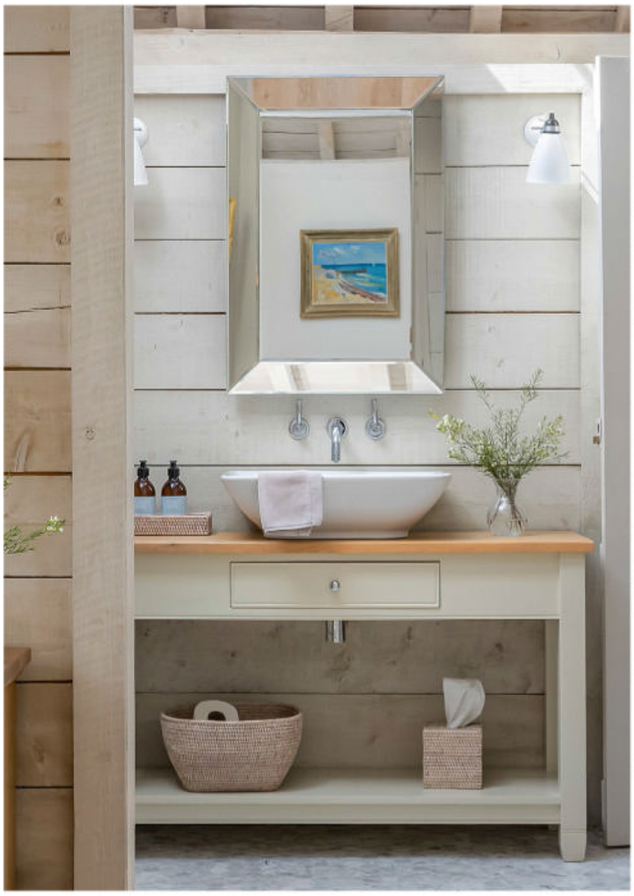
Those Provençal trips also inspired the couple's approach to furnishing, sourcing timeless finds from markets such as L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue and pairing them with linen upholstery, oversized accessories and paintings by their artist daughter, Daisy. 'What I love about this home is its longevity,' notes Emma. 'Almost 20 years on, very little has changed – I simply reupholster pieces as they become worn.'

The house has also provided a testing ground for Neptune designs, from the rustic timber cladding in the couple's bedroom to the washstand in their en suite. Even the sitting room's library wall went on to inspire a bookshelf collection. 'They're pieces we loved so much, we thought others might enjoy them, too,' says Emma.

The surrounding countryside, rich with holly, ivy and mistletoe, makes sprucing up the home for Christmas wonderfully easy. 'It's just as it was when I was a child – we go out and forage greenery, then I add lots of candles to create a magical atmosphere,' she says. Here, festive decoration becomes an effortless extension of the home's timeless style. ㉕

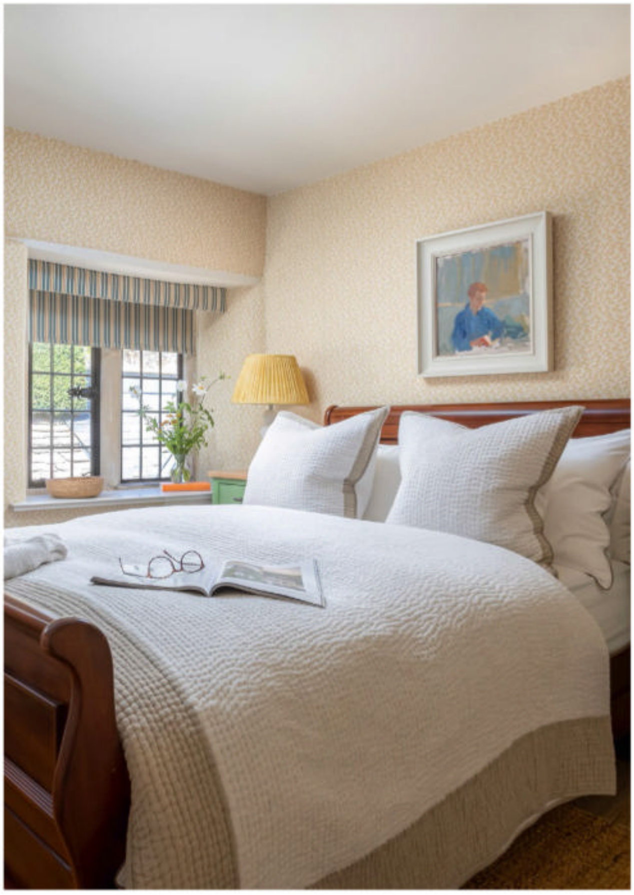
*Lavender is available to rent through boutique-retreats.co.uk*

**'I LOVE THE FACT THAT THE INTERIORS FEEL PRETTY TIMELESS – A LOT OF THE PIECES WERE CHOSEN ALMOST 20 YEARS AGO'**



BATHROOM

**Shiplap boarding brings a layer of texture to the walls, while the washstand was an early prototype for a Neptune design.**
Cranbrook rough shiplap boarding; the Chichester washstand is similar, both Neptune



BEDROOM

**A portrait of the couple's son, painted by their daughter Daisy, hangs above a bateau bed.**
Folly wallpaper in Straw, Veere Grenney. Blind in Marcel Stripe in Antique Blue and Gold, Chelsea Textiles. Try Pamono for an antique bateau bed

LIVE BEAUTIFUL
Good Times

no. IO

# It's cosy inside

***There's a warmth to this cottage that's hard to resist – Charlotte Hammond of HollandGreen explains why it's so inviting***

**WORDS** JULIET BENNING | **PHOTOGRAPHY** ASTRID TEMPLIER

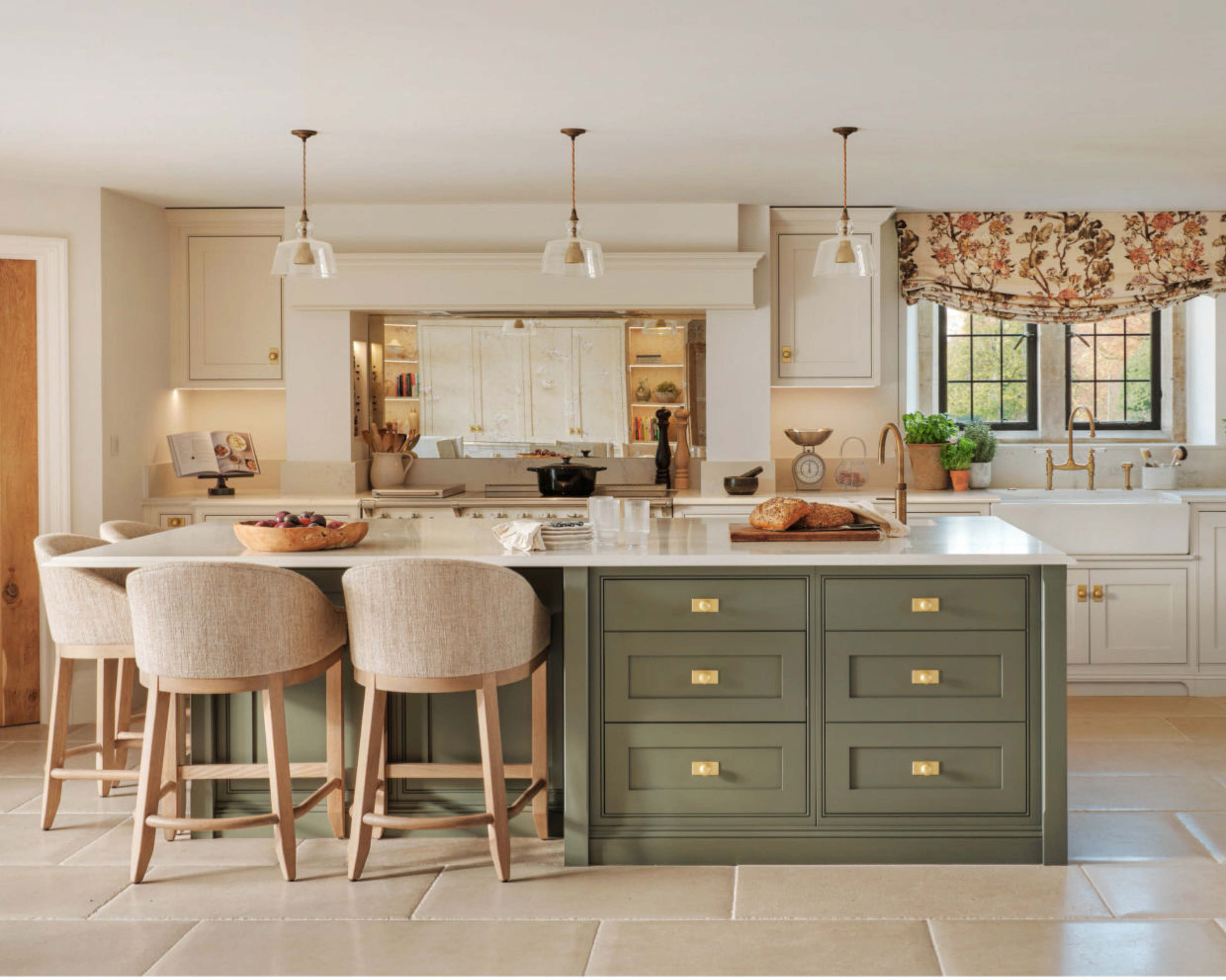
## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** An early 20th-century cottage

**ROOMS** Kitchen/dining room, boot/utility room, cloakroom, playroom, sitting room, family room, five bedrooms, four bathrooms

**LOCATION** Cotswolds

**FAMILY ROOM** **Pale walls and upholstery allow the warmth and character of the wood beams to make an impact.** Bespoke sofas; source similar at Love Your Home. Curtains in Ambrose Dove, Colefax and Fowler. For a similar warm white paint, try Plaster I, Paint & Paper Library



**CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PROPERTY AND HOW IT LOOKED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT?** With its Cotswold stone exterior and fascinating history, the house had undeniable charm. It had originally been built in 1919 as two farmworkers' cottages but had been patched together over time. The property offered a generous footprint but had interiors that lacked warmth and cohesion.

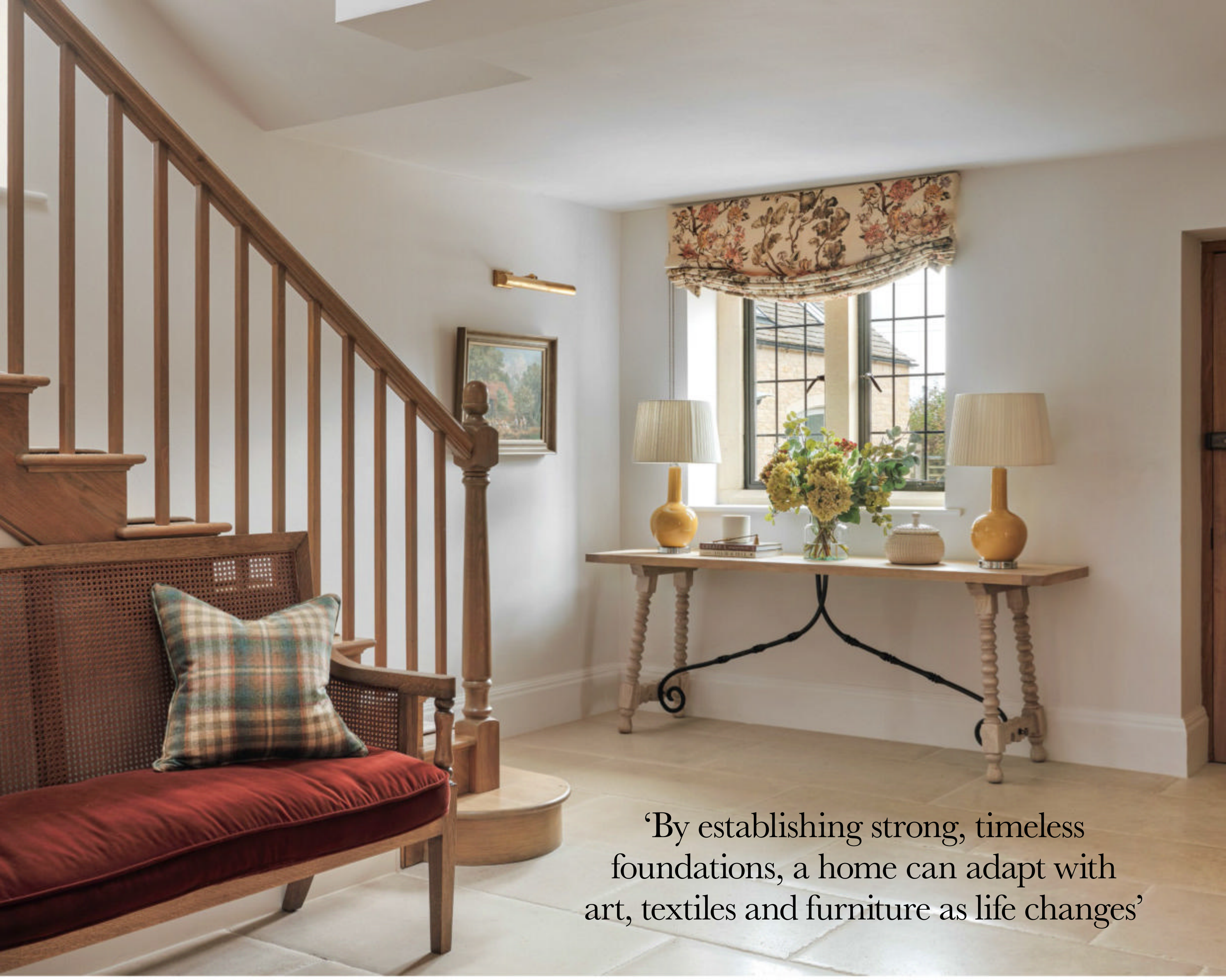
**WHAT WERE THE CLIENTS' PRIORITIES?** They were a married couple with two young girls and a newborn by the time they moved in. Midway through the project, a guest bedroom was reimagined as a nursery following their exciting news. They wanted to draw inspiration from their extensive travels but also for the interior to sit harmoniously within the Cotswold landscape. The wife runs a Pilates studio from the grounds and envisioned a home that reflected her warm, inclusive approach to life while blending family and business seamlessly. Most importantly, the couple wanted this to be a forever home where their children could grow up.

**WHAT WAS HOLLAND GREEN'S VISION FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PROPERTY?** It centred on creating a light-filled, open-plan kitchen and dining space to serve as the heart of the home. By removing the wall that divided the small kitchen and dining room, one generous, flowing space emerged. Natural light now travels seamlessly throughout

**KITCHEN**
**Pendant lights make the island a focal point. The steel-framed windows flood the room with light and garden views.**
Blind in Nala linen, GP & J Baker. Bespoke bar chairs; for similar, try Pottery Barn. Lovell pendant lights, Jim Lawrence

**UTILITY ROOM**
**A traditional kitchen maid dryer offers plenty of indoor drying space.**
Marlborough terracotta tiles, Ca' Pietra Artisans. Cabinetry supplied by Langstaff. Blind in Oriental Bird fabric, GP & J Baker. Source similar sink, Butler & Rose. Units in Cargo, Coat

**DINING AREA**
**Level limestone flagstones create a seamless connection with the patio. Slip linen chair covers can be removed for cleaning.**
Source similar limestone tiles from Ca' Pietra Artisans. Anders dining chair, Sofa.com, is similar. Bespoke dining table; try Cox & Cox for similar



‘By establishing strong, timeless foundations, a home can adapt with art, textiles and furniture as life changes’

the ground floor, avoiding the darker inner core that might have been created with an extension, and preserving the character of the kitchen courtyard.

**WERE THERE ANY OTHER CHANGES TO THE FLOOR PLAN?** On the ground floor, the WC and playroom were reimagined to give the playroom more space and direct access from the kitchen. Upstairs, the main bedroom was transformed into a luxurious suite with its own dressing room and an en suite featuring a free-standing bath, separate shower and double vanity.

**WHAT INSPIRED THE COLOUR AND MATERIALS PALETTE?** The overall palette was grounded in natural, earthy, muted tones. Texture played a key role in creating a welcoming, lived-in feel, with stone flooring, hand-painted joinery, brass hardware, linen slipcovered furniture, wicker-backed stools and floral or biographic fabrics all layered into the scheme.

**WHAT HAS BECOME THE CLIENTS’ FAVOURITE ROOM?** The kitchen is the undisputed heart of the home. Anchored by a sprawling farmhouse table, it was designed for Sunday lunches, family meals and gatherings with friends. We added a Lacanche stove which has become a focal point, while layers of brass detailing, linen, wicker, and floral fabrics soften the scheme with elevated country charm.

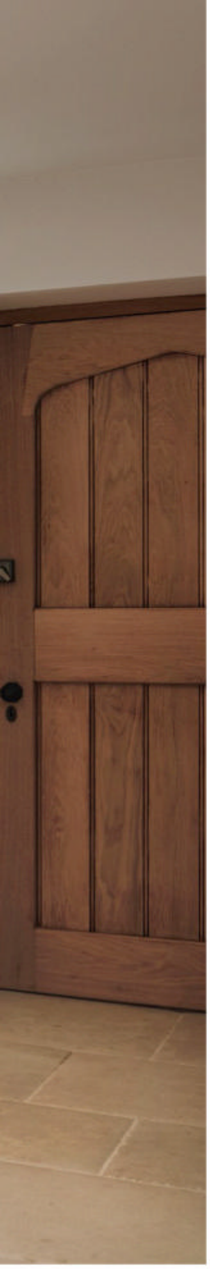
*hollandgreen.co.uk*

**HALLWAY**
**A console table with lamps provides an elegant welcome.** Source similar console table, Lorfords. Lamp, source similar Oka; and shade, Pooky. Blind in Wild Side fabric, Mulberry Home. Bespoke bench; source similar at Garden Trading

**CHILD’S BEDROOM**
**A bobbin bed lends character to this soft and muted space which encourages rest.** Bed made bespoke; source similar at Chelsea Textiles. Cabinetry, Langstaff

**CLOAKROOM**
**A wine-red ceiling pairs well with a soft grey-and-cream ikat wallpaper, while a walnut vanity topped with Violetta marble adds a luxurious finish.** Papyrus wallpaper, Lewis & Wood. Thea smoke wall lights, Heathfield & Co. Aerin Arabelle flush mount ceiling light, Visual Comfort & Co. Ceiling in Adventurer, Little Greene

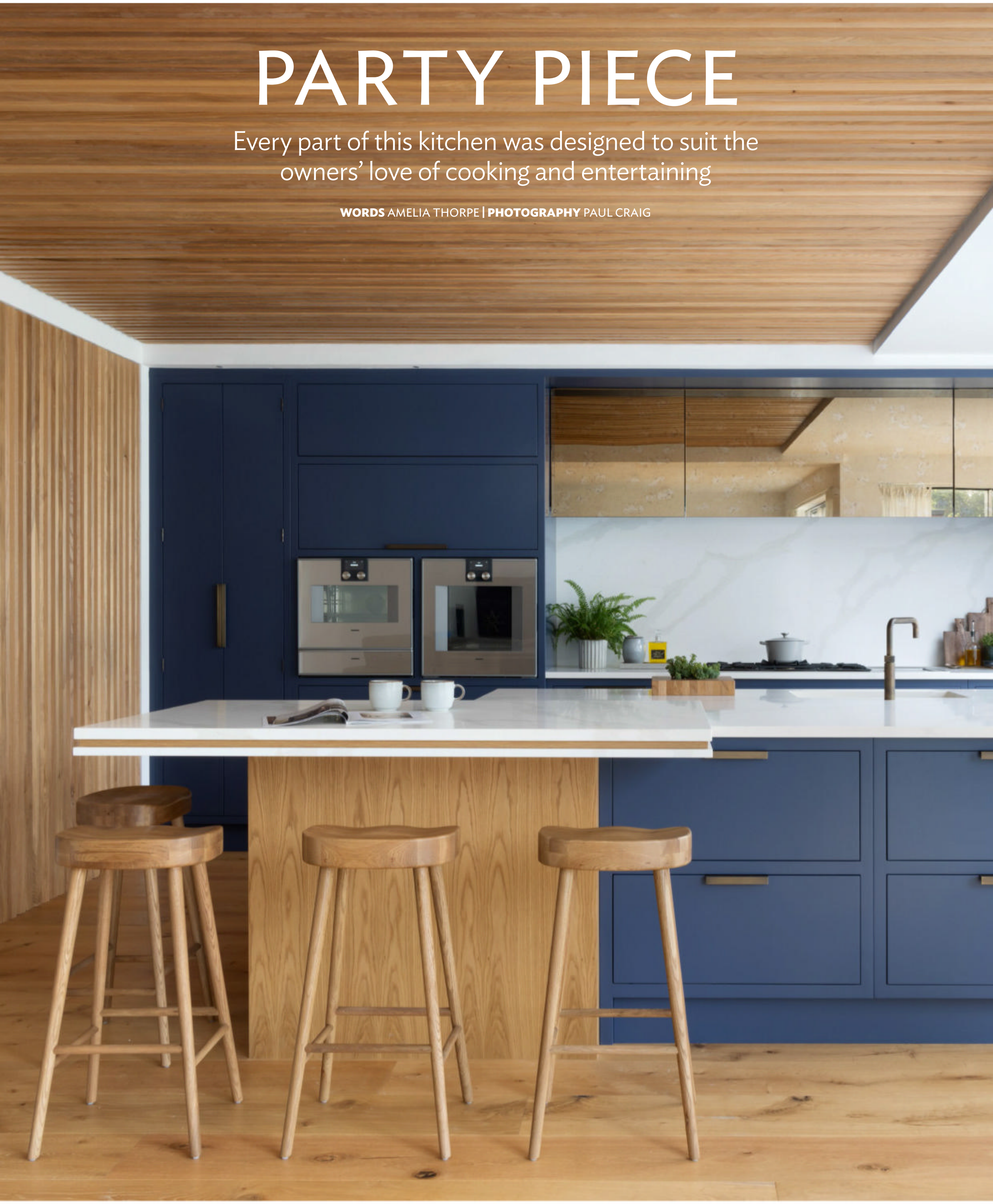
**MAIN BEDROOM**
**A large format illustrative wallpaper ensures the slanting walls become a characterful feature.** Adam’s Eden wallpaper, Lewis & Wood. Curtain in Plain Oatmeal house linen, GP & J Baker. Hendon table lamp, Jim Lawrence; shade, Pooky



# PARTY PIECE

Every part of this kitchen was designed to suit the owners' love of cooking and entertaining

**WORDS** AMELIA THORPE | **PHOTOGRAPHY** PAUL CRAIG



# no. II

Keen to build their dream home, a couple bought a dated bungalow on a large plot in a pretty village. 'They replaced it with a contemporary new build,' says Millie Cupit, senior designer at Krantz Designs, who was commissioned to create an equally modern kitchen for the property.

## PROJECT DETAILS

**DESIGNER**
Millie Cupit, Krantz Designs (krantzdesigns.co.uk)

**PROPERTY**
New-build detached house

**WORK**
Installation of new kitchen

**LOCATION**
Oxfordshire

### 1 SETTING THE STYLE

As part of a large, open-plan living and dining space, the kitchen was to be an inviting hub in their five-bedroom home, designed specifically to suit the couple's love of both cooking and socialising. 'The house has a clean-lined Scandinavian feel throughout with lots of light oak,' says Millie. 'The brief was to create a stunning kitchen, as part of a massive entertaining space, using a similar palette of materials and featuring their favourite blue colour.'

### 2 ISLAND LIFE

'After seeing pictures of our designs, the owners came to us because all our kitchens are bespoke,' explains Millie. 'They knew that we could create something entirely suited and scaled to their space.' While it made sense to use the rear wall for an impressive 7m-long run of cabinetry to house all the built-in appliances, storage and a hob zone, the key feature of the room is an imaginative island designed for extravagant meal preparation. A bar bridges on to the main prep area of the island before sweeping down to banquette seating by the dining table, immaculately zoned by material details. 'For example, the bar has oak sandwiched between double layers of quartz to produce a shadow effect and to raise the height of the surface to create an area distinct from the main island,' she says. Set on an oak 'table' pedestal, the bar zone makes an inviting area to gather for coffee or drinks.

### 3 OAK HIGHLIGHTS

The same oak, this time in slatted form, has been used to clad the ceiling and wall, picking up on the linear design of the kitchen furniture. 'Each slat is cut on a 45° chamfer with lighting in the ceiling to create a gentle glow in the evenings and to highlight the natural beauty of the timber,' explains Millie.

### 4 WARMING UP

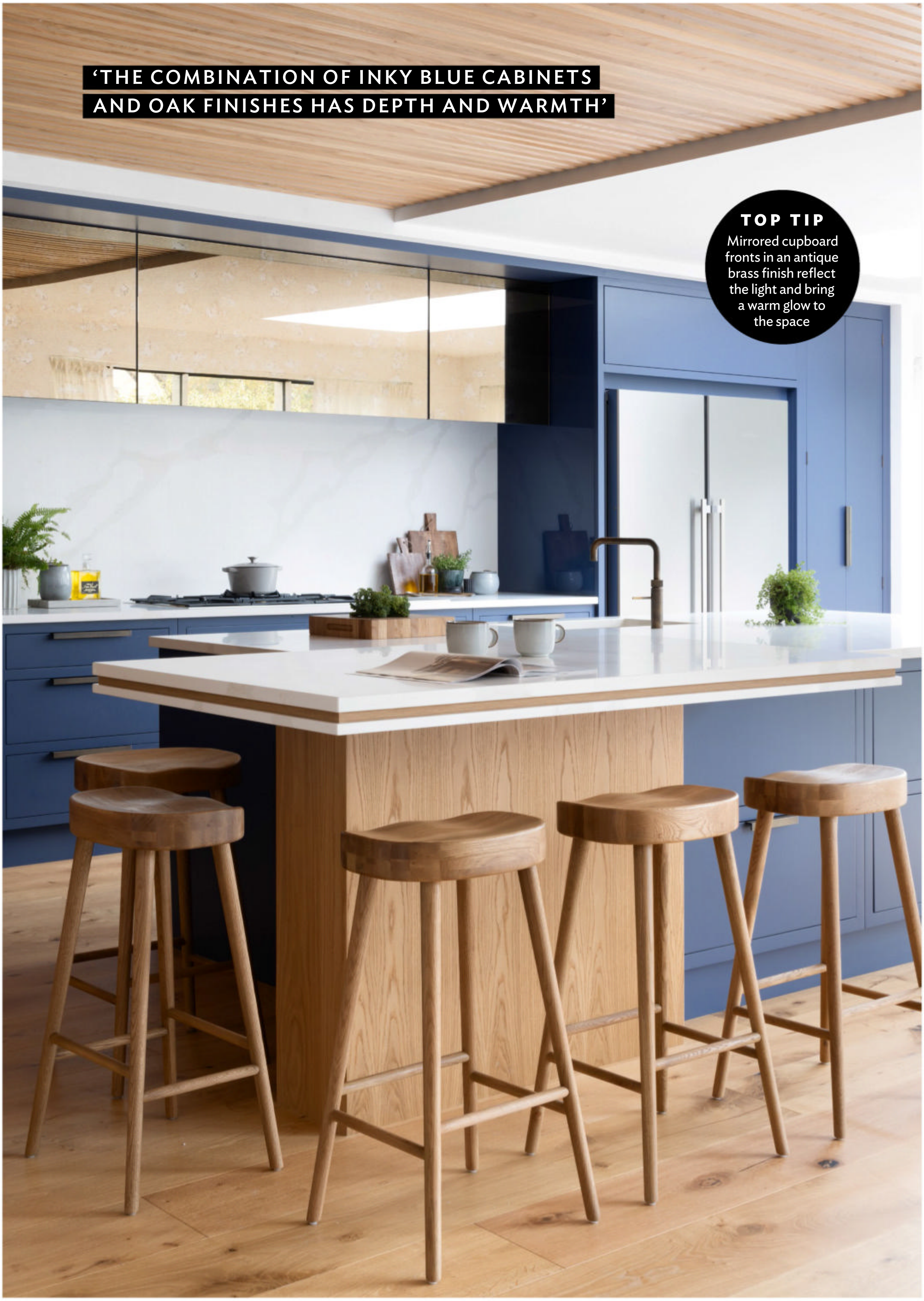
All cabinetry is flat-fronted to accentuate the contemporary feel of the room, painted in a dark sapphire blue to add depth. 'Combined with the wood and antique brass elements in the room, the mood is warm and welcoming,' says Millie.

**CENTRE STAGE**

**The island features areas for gathering, prepping and dining. The tall pantry cupboard, left, includes sockets for appliances so worktops can be kept clutter-free.** Bespoke Plain Slab **cabinetry** in Benjamin Moore's Stunning with section of **wall cupboards** in Antique Brass mirror; oak **bar**; slatted oak **ceiling** and **wall cladding**, all Krantz Designs

## MATERIAL MIX

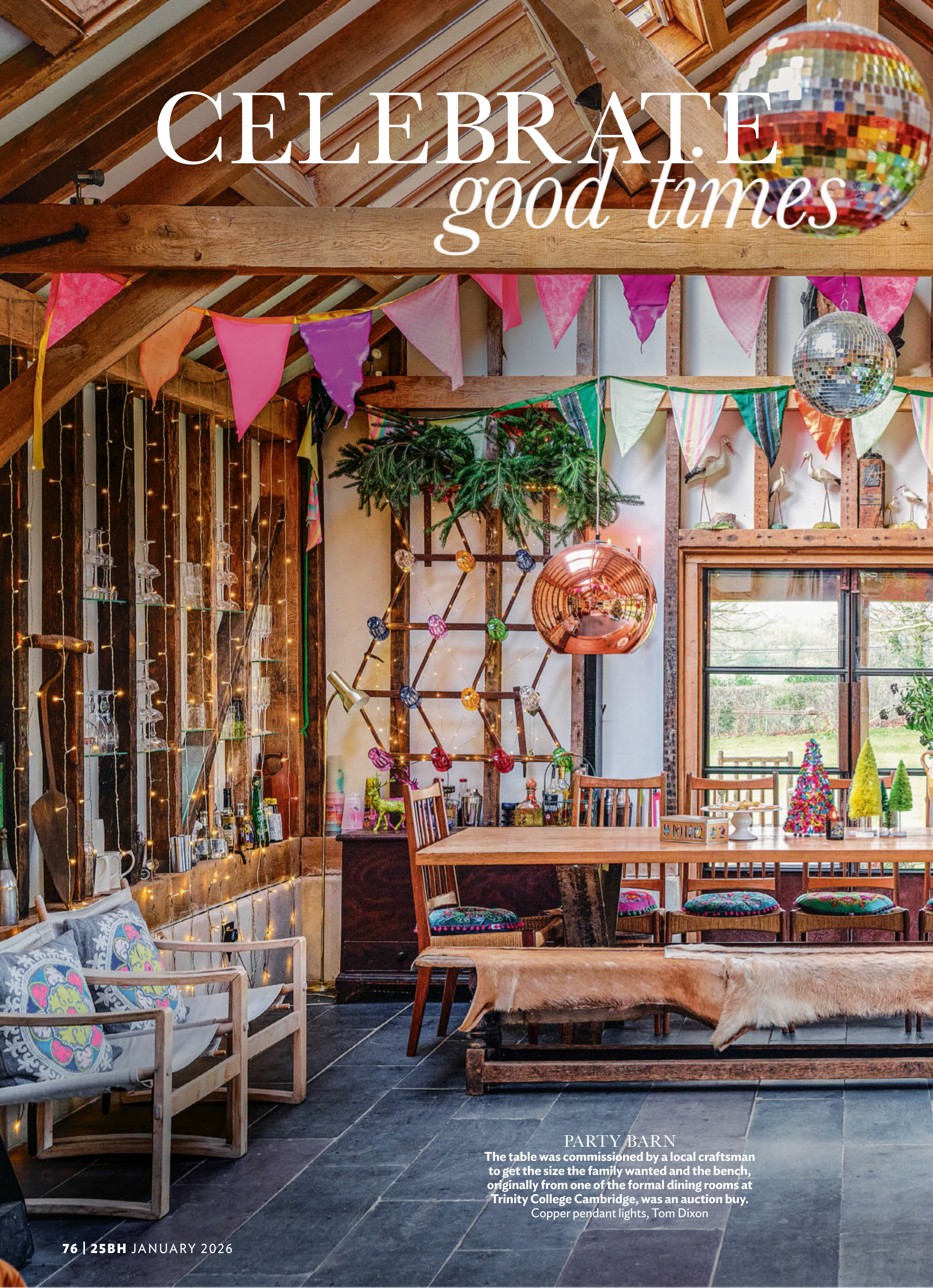
**The bespoke dining table features an oak base supporting a quartz top, chosen to match the island work surface. Slatted oak ceiling cladding lines up perfectly with the wall panelling to accentuate the immaculate finish of the room.** Banquette **seating upholstered in** Sunbury Design faux leather; **dining table**, Krantz Designs. Cambridge quartz surface **worktops** and **splashback**, Krantz Designs. Edgbaston pull **handles** in Satin Antique Satin Lacquered finish, Armac Martin. **Oven**; **combination steam oven**; **warming drawer**; **teppan yaki hob**; **gas hob**, all Gaggenau. Bloque Slim built-in **extractor**, Westin. **Fridge-freezer**, Liebherr. Fully integrated **dishwasher**, Miele. Fusion Square **boiling, hot and cold tap** in Patinated Brass, Quooker. AxixUno undermounted **sink** in Gold Brass with sides clad in quartz to match worktop, The 1810 Company. Rayne Solid Weathered Oak kitchen counter **stools**, Furniture 123. For similar engineered oak **flooring**, try Domus. Masa Oak **dining chairs**, Furniturebox



'THE COMBINATION OF INKY BLUE CABINETS AND OAK FINISHES HAS DEPTH AND WARMTH'

**TOP TIP**
Mirrored cupboard fronts in an antique brass finish reflect the light and bring a warm glow to the space

# CELEBRATE *good times*



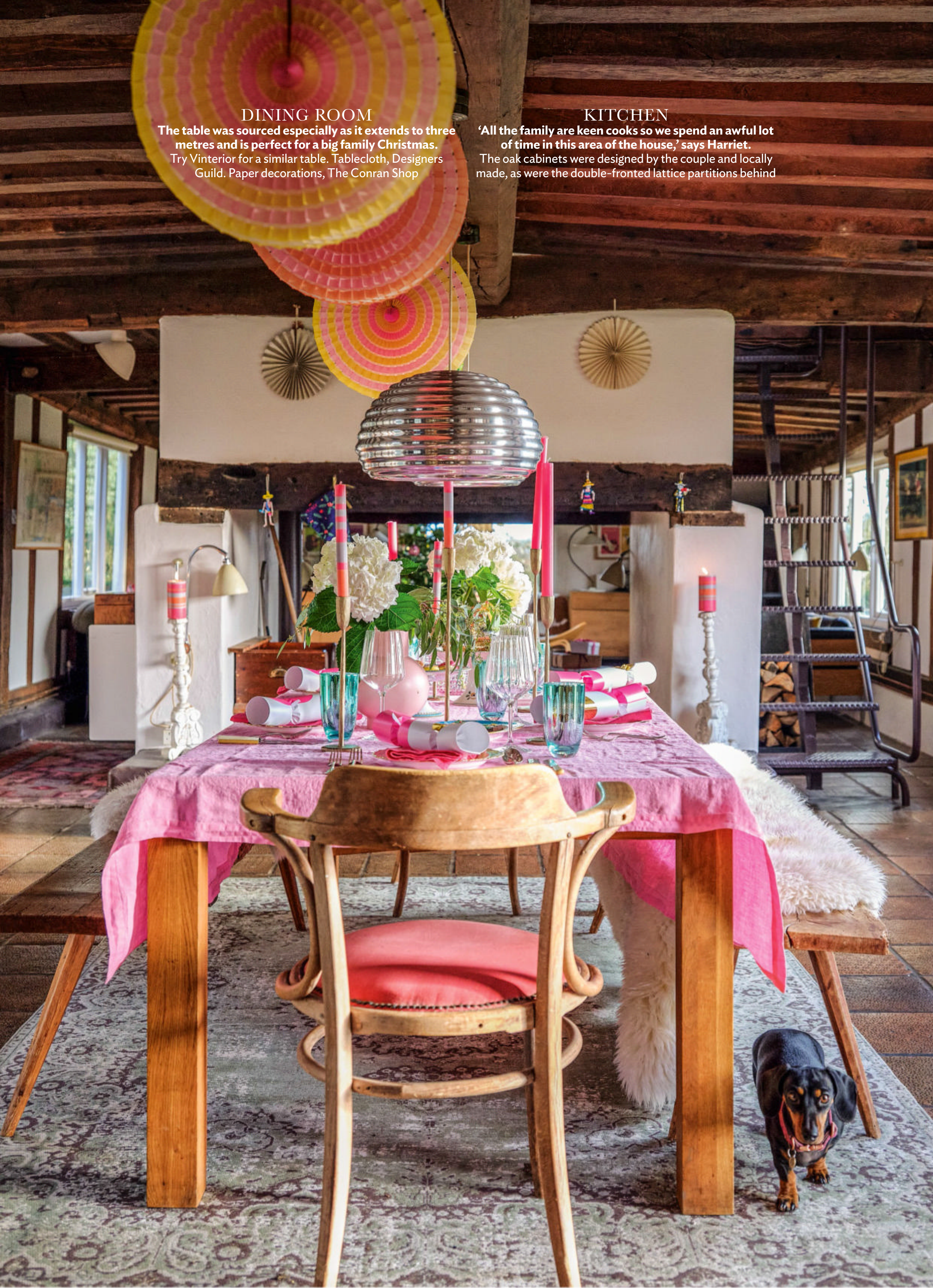
PARTY BARN

**The table was commissioned by a local craftsman to get the size the family wanted and the bench, originally from one of the formal dining rooms at Trinity College Cambridge, was an auction buy.**
Copper pendant lights, Tom Dixon

## no. 12

Harriet Hastings restored a traditional Suffolk longhouse and built a new party barn beside it - and it's really the most wonderful place to spend Christmas

**WORDS** SARA BIRD
**PHOTOGRAPHY** DAN DUCHARS



DINING ROOM

**The table was sourced especially as it extends to three metres and is perfect for a big family Christmas.** Try Vinterior for a similar table. Tablecloth, Designers Guild. Paper decorations, The Conran Shop

KITCHEN

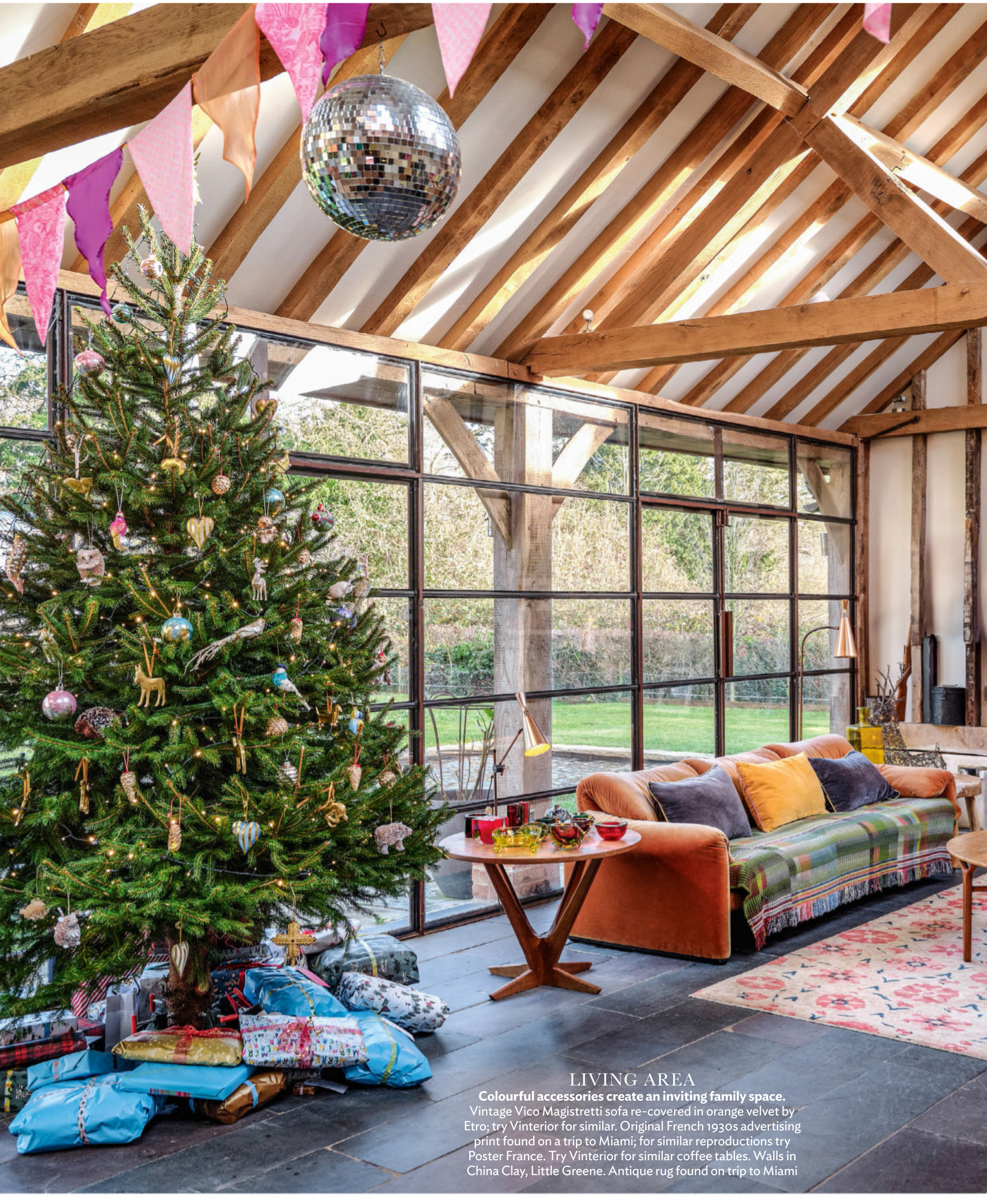
**'All the family are keen cooks so we spend an awful lot of time in this area of the house,' says Harriet.** The oak cabinets were designed by the couple and locally made, as were the double-fronted lattice partitions behind

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** 1540s Grade II-listed timber longhouse

**ROOMS** Open-plan kitchen-diner/living area, five bedrooms, five bathrooms, self-contained outside party barn with kitchen

**LOCATION** Suffolk



LIVING AREA

**Colourful accessories create an inviting family space.** Vintage Vico Magistretti sofa re-covered in orange velvet by Etro; try Vinterior for similar. Original French 1930s advertising print found on a trip to Miami; for similar reproductions try Poster France. Try Vinterior for similar coffee tables. Walls in China Clay, Little Greene. Antique rug found on trip to Miami

KINA
LILLET
AU VIN BLANC DE LA GIRONDE

For Harriet and Stevie Congdon, it was an unwitting 'try before you buy' situation that led to them securing their Suffolk house. The couple, founders of iced biscuit company Biscuiteers, were friends with the former owners, architects Sir Michael and Lady Patty Hopkins and frequently stayed as guests. 'Michael had bought the property from the church in the 1960s and created the open-plan space that exists today,' says Harriet. 'We weren't really looking for a house at the time, it was just serendipity that Michael and Patty moved to another place and we made a spontaneous decision to make it ours.'

The house was structurally sound but missing elements needed for modern life. 'We were spending more time there than the former owners, so needed more sockets to plug things in, as well as some household essentials,' says Harriet. 'It was also going to be a home for our young children and dogs, so needed to be warm, comfortable and relaxed.'

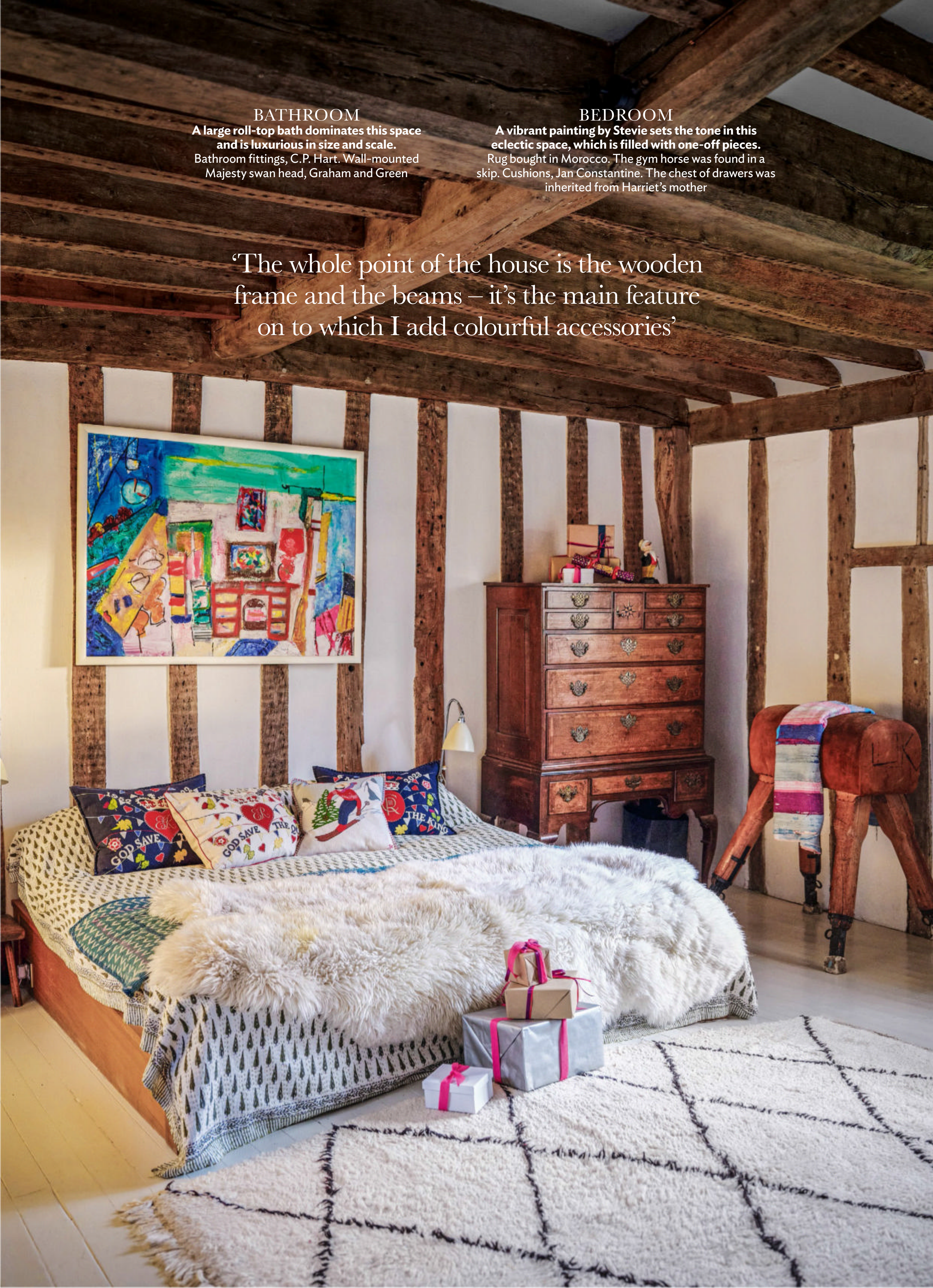
The first change was installing a new kitchen, which was bespoke for the house due to the property's age and certain building restrictions. The existing cooker was sited in an old fireplace and it was an obvious choice to keep it there as the central cooking space. However, the nearby windows were too low to allow a standard-height worktop beneath, so Harriet and Stevie ingeniously positioned freestanding units away from the walls, backed by lattice wooden partitions that create a room within a room. 'I didn't want solid walls as this would have blocked the light, so the lattice design allows daylight to come in,' explains Harriet.

Timber-framed houses, with their dark beams and low ceilings, can feel oppressive, so the couple increased the number of light fittings. Once again, the building threw up challenges. 'Because you can't chase in pipework and wiring in a house like ours, everything is surface-mounted,' says Harriet. 'We didn't want to damage the integrity of the building so copper wiring was laid over the beams.' The same thinking was applied to the heating which had to be installed from scratch with copper pipework. The couple also fitted bespoke radiators, designed to be narrower than usual so they didn't stand out and draw the eye.

The biggest change was the creation of a new barn alongside the original property. Having a large family and with the downstairs of the house an open-plan zone, there needed to be another area that could be used as a breakout space. Connected to the house via a series of paths, it is self-contained with its own kitchen. The barn was designed by Stevie and installed by a local company using reclaimed materials. 'The big difference between the barn and the longhouse is that while both are timber framed, the barn is a modern construction designed to look old but is wonderfully insulated,' says Harriet. 'It's a cosy space to hang out in.'

The process of renovating and living in the house has been a gradual experience and one which has changed with the needs of the family. The success and operation of Biscuiteers, launched in 2007 after the house was bought, has meant the house has been a retreat for the family to spend time together. 'We've been here a very long time and the children have grown up here,' says Harriet. 'It's full of happy memories, including many lovely Christmases.' ㉕

*biscuiteers.com*



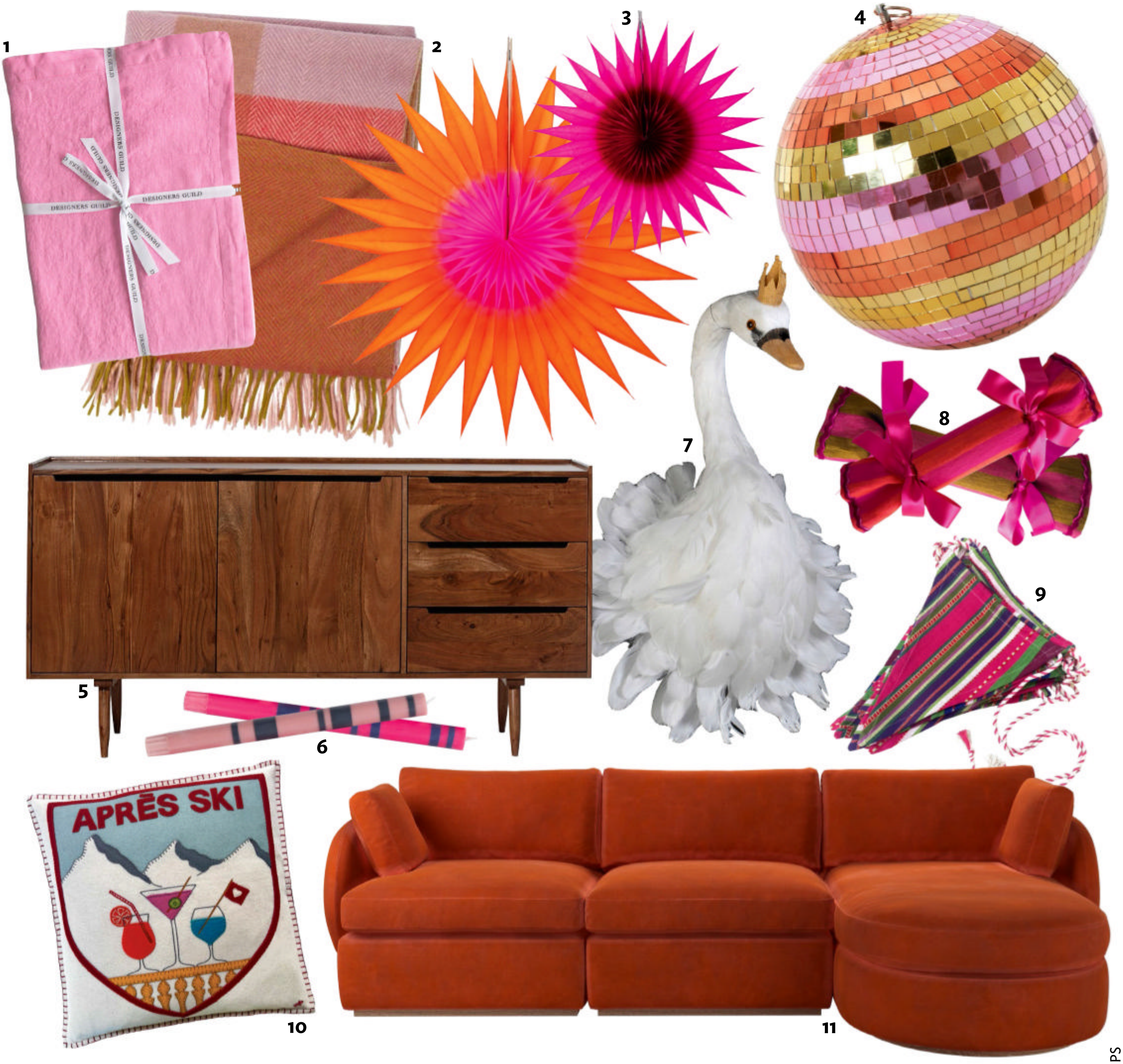
BATHROOM
**A large roll-top bath dominates this space and is luxurious in size and scale.** Bathroom fittings, C.P. Hart. Wall-mounted Majesty swan head, Graham and Green

BEDROOM
**A vibrant painting by Stevie sets the tone in this eclectic space, which is filled with one-off pieces.** Rug bought in Morocco. The gym horse was found in a skip. Cushions, Jan Constantine. The chest of drawers was inherited from Harriet's mother

> 'The whole point of the house is the wooden frame and the beams – it's the main feature on to which I add colourful accessories'

# STYLE *inspiration*

Embrace Harriet's fun and joyful party spirit with carnival-inspired decorations, punchy colours and eclectic accessories



**1** Lario linen tablecloth in Camellia, £95, Designers Guild **2** Recycled wool blanket in Pink Herringbone Offset Check, £110, Casa by Josephine Jenno **3** Two colour paper fans in Hot Pink Orange and Burgundy Fuchsia, £3.50 each, RE **4** Stripey disco ball in Gold and Pink, £58, Rockett St George **5** Southwark sideboard in Dark Brown Acacia, £859, Swoon **6** Striped eco dinner candles in Mixed Warms, £33 for 6, British Colour Standard **7** Majesty swan head, £59.50, Graham and Green **8** Luxury linen reusable fabric crackers in Berry + Biscotti and Fuchsia + Clementine, £35 each, Happy Crackers **9** Cotton bunting in Hot Pink Stripe, £22.50, The Stripes Company **10** Après Ski Cocktails cushion, £139, Jan Constantine **11** Ren complete sofa set with storage chaise in Moroccan Spice Smart Velvet, £4,570, Sofa.com

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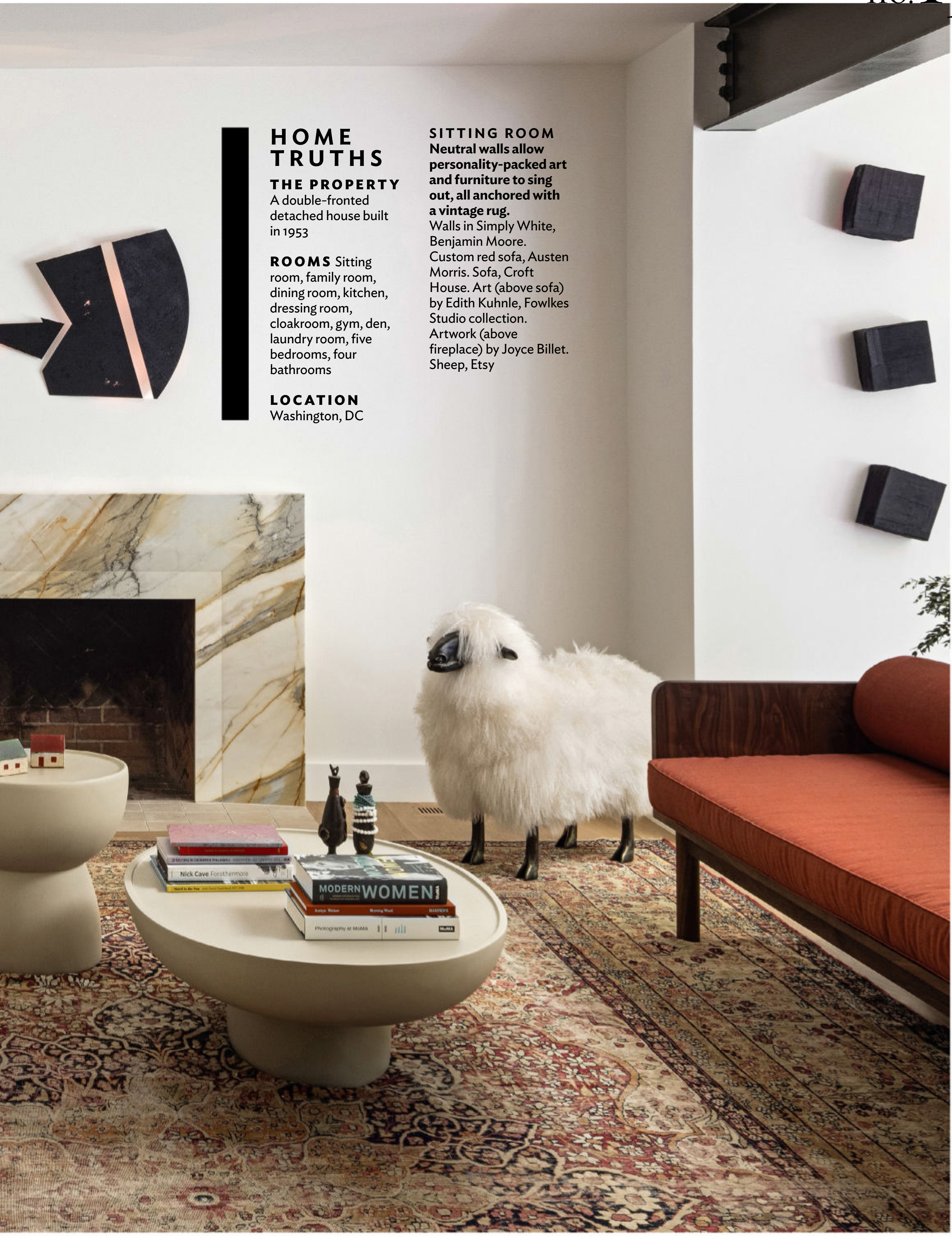
# A star is born

*Standout pieces abound in a 1950s-built home that's now a shining example of what good design can achieve*

**WORDS** MARY WEAVER | **STYLING** FOWLKES STUDIO
**PHOTOGRAPHY** JENN VERRIER

no.13


Nick Cave Forothermore
MODERN WOMEN
MoMA
Photography at MoMA

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** A double-fronted detached house built in 1953

**ROOMS** Sitting room, family room, dining room, kitchen, dressing room, cloakroom, gym, den, laundry room, five bedrooms, four bathrooms

**LOCATION** Washington, DC

**SITTING ROOM**
**Neutral walls allow personality-packed art and furniture to sing out, all anchored with a vintage rug.**
Walls in Simply White, Benjamin Moore. Custom red sofa, Austen Morris. Sofa, Croft House. Art (above sofa) by Edith Kuhnle, Fowlkes Studio collection. Artwork (above fireplace) by Joyce Billet. Sheep, Etsy

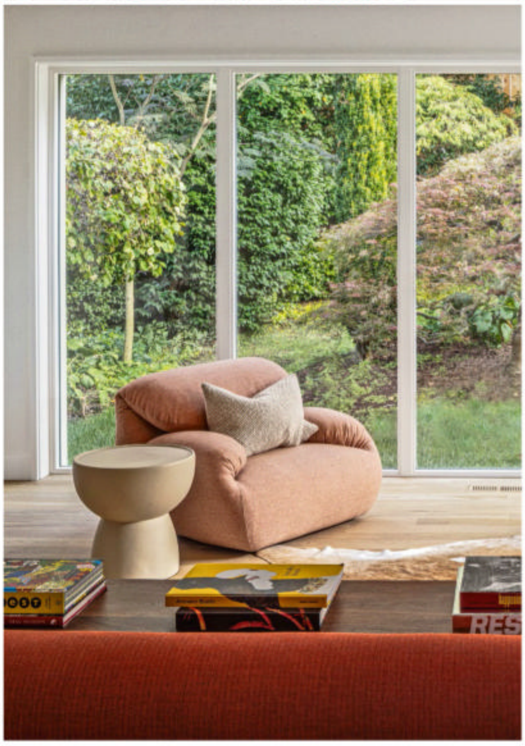
> ‘This was about creating a serene home that flowed seamlessly yet had a vibrant and funky edge’

Photography at MoMA
MoMA

**DINING AREA**
**Neutral walls showcase the orange lanterns hung at different heights.**
Pendant lights, Taiwan-Lantern. Table, Arhaus. Chairs, Blu Dot. TMBO chair & ottoman by Magnus Læssøe Stephensen via Gestalt New York. Vintage rug, Double Knot

**KITCHEN**
**'This was designed for real cooks and real life but with attention to beautiful surfaces since it was visible from much of the rest of the house,' says Catherine.**
Walnut cabinetry, quartzite island and worktops designed by Fowlkes Studio and made by Ferris Custom Cabinetry

**FRONT HALL**
**Graphic floor tiles contrast with the elegant lines of the curving staircase.**
Walls in Simply White, Benjamin Moore. Kelly floor tiles, Popham Design

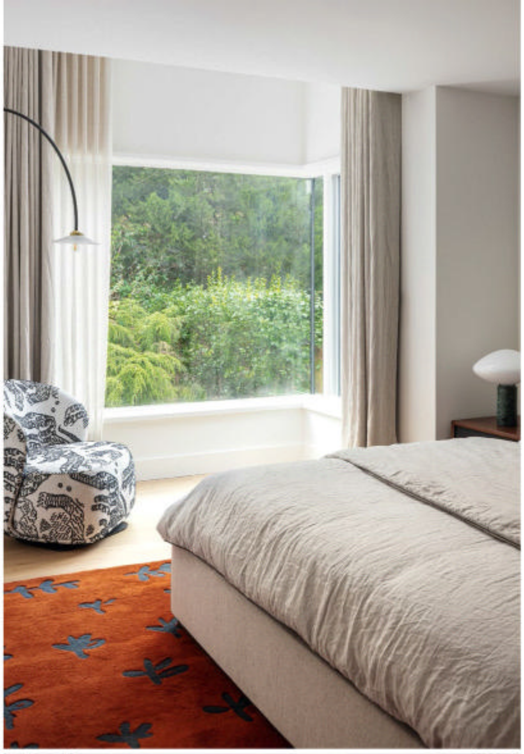


**SITTING ROOM**
**The new rear extension is designed to connect strongly to the garden and bring the outside into the house.**
White oak flooring, Classic Floor Designs. Side table, Rove Concepts. Armchair, Design within Reach

One minute Lauren and Nick Penneys were happily ensconced in New York City, the next they had decided to move to Washington, DC, bought a house and got married. 'It actually took two weeks to do all those things, I am quite spontaneous for better or worse,' laughs Lauren who was relocating for work with her tech company. She and lawyer Nick were able to buy a detached, three-storey, 1953-built house in a historic area of Washington, 'a village within the city with an old-world vibe'. 'And coming from NYC we thought the house, with a garage, was the most luxurious thing in the world,' she says.

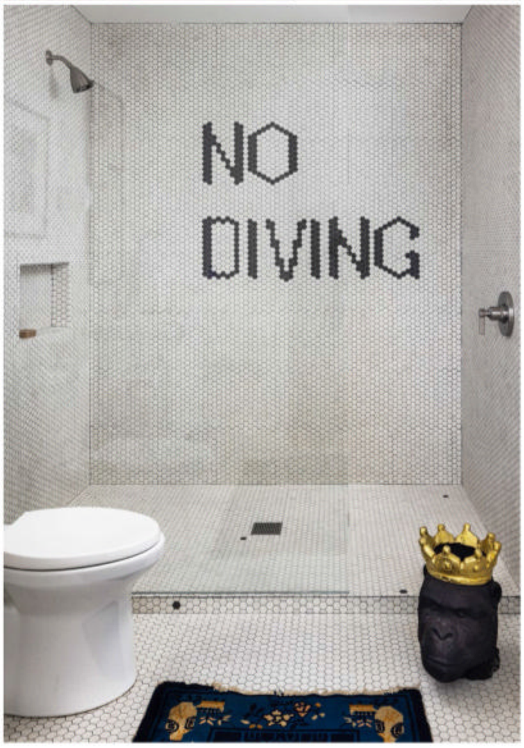
Discussing their new renovation ideas with a friend, she put them in touch with husband and wife architects Catherine and VW of Fowlkes Studio who, having grown up there, have lifelong experience of the houses and spirit of the area. 'They have the ability to blend contemporary ideas without being too trend-led,' says Lauren. 'They were wonderful at interpreting our personal style and incorporating a lot of items from our lives and our families.' Lauren is originally from Miami – 'it's where I learnt to love art and beauty' – and the couple wanted that sunshine vibe incorporated into their new home.

Architect Catherine says: 'The idea was to retain the historical look of the front facade while gutting and reconfiguring the interior and adding a rear extension all with the idea of prioritising natural light and an easy flow.' She and VW, plus another company



**UPSTAIRS HALLWAY**
**This family antique was given an update with fresh upholstery.**
Sofa reupholstered in Anni Albers Eclat Weave, Knoll. Wall light, Claude Home. Blind, Hunter Douglas

**MAIN BEDROOM**
**A large corner window frames a wonderful view of the garden.**
Sheer and blackout curtains in fabric by Kvadrat. Bed linen, Cultiver. La Pipe Lounge chair, Friends & Founder. Rug, Nordic Knots



**VANITY**
**Two opposing vanities with stone tops and splashbacks - chiselled with 'free edges' – were designed to be slightly different from each other and reflect in the opposing mirrors.**
Vanities in Jolie Grey marble and walnut designed by Fowlkes Studio and made by Ferris Custom Cabinetry and Petra Stone. Taps, Watermark. Wall lights, Artemide. Pink artwork by Edith Kuhnle, Fowlkes Studio collection

**BATHROOM**
**'We chose a restrained tonal scheme for this but were excited to give it personality reflecting the client's interest in whimsy,' says Catherine.**
Wall and floor tiles with words designed by Fowlkes Studio

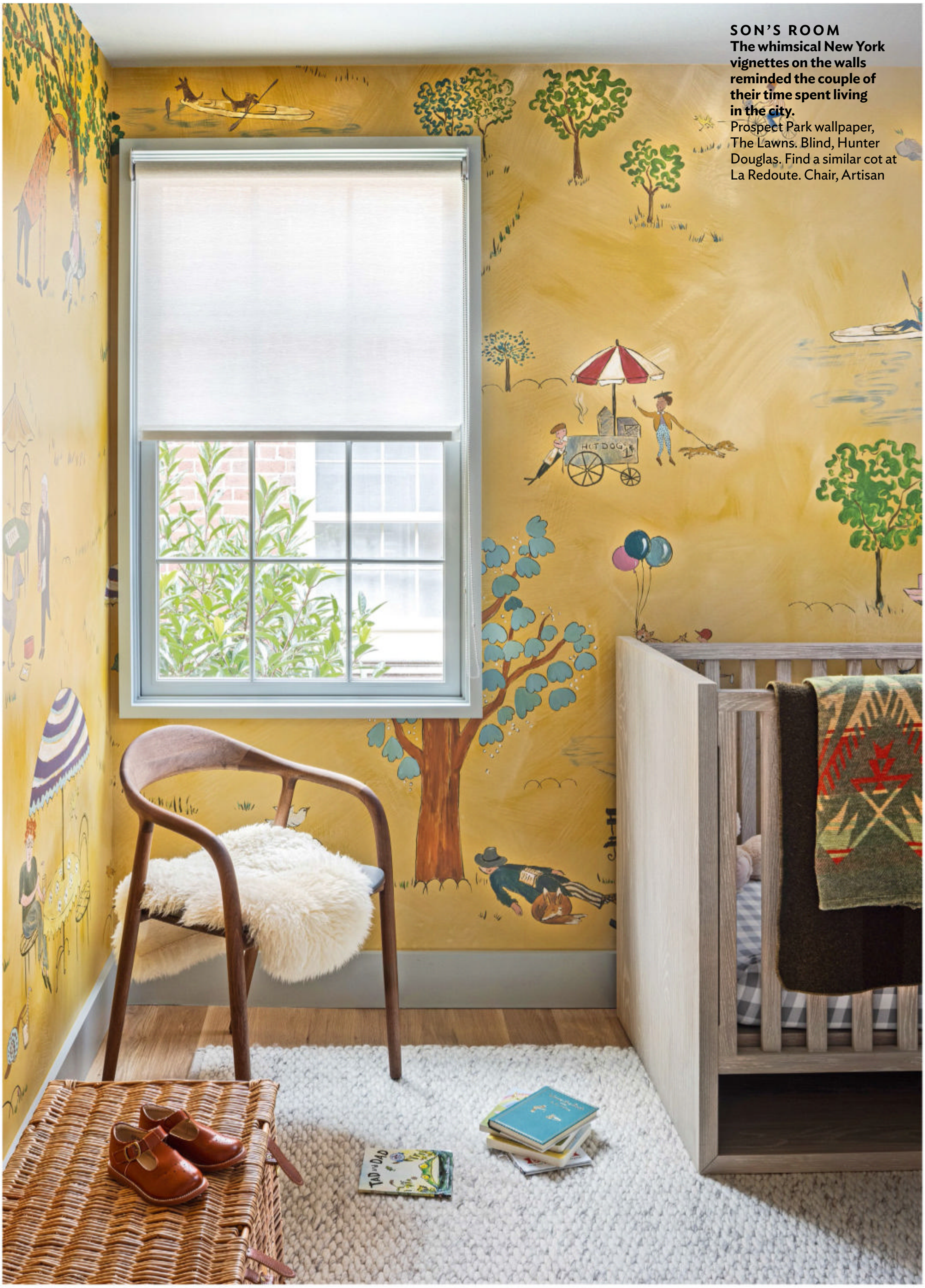
architect Evie Soileau worked on all aspects of the renovation. 'The project was a joy as we were collaborating with top-notch builders and enthusiastic clients who highly valued our sensibility,' she adds.

Lauren and Nick's vision of 'a funky, vibrant home that reflected our personalities' was interpreted in new open spaces that also adapt for their now two-and-a-half-year-old son, Hamilton, and their lively chocolate Labrador puppy, Calvin. Walnut-edged door surrounds between the hall and kitchen-dining room appear open but can close for privacy and removable safety gates for the stairs have been factored in.

'We leaned into their desire for a harmonious whole with some moments of punchiness and a bit of an edge,' says Catherine referencing the unexpected exposed steel beam and raw-finish wall in the sitting room and colourful cement tiles in the hall.

The decorating palette with warm white walls allows Lauren's Miami-inspired art collection and funky furniture to take centre stage, while understated luxurious materials – walnut, marble, burnished brass – contrast with edgy finishes like the raw stone bathroom vanities and amusing elements such as a friendly sheep in the sitting room and the 'no diving' tiled shower room. 'Fowlkes Studio really got us,' says Lauren. 'We had no puppy and no baby when we started so I think we didn't even fully understand what we needed.'

*fowlkesstudio.com*



**SON'S ROOM**

**The whimsical New York vignettes on the walls reminded the couple of their time spent living in the city.**

Prospect Park wallpaper, The Lawns. Blind, Hunter Douglas. Find a similar cot at La Redoute. Chair, Artisan

no. 14

# SNOW WHITE

***The all-white interior of a Cornish cottage is magically transformed for the festive season with natural textures, rustic finds and soft candlelight***

**WORDS** SARA EMSLIE
**PHOTOGRAPHY** © UNIQUE HOMESTAYS, UNIQUEHOMESTAYS.COM

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**
Former fisherman's cottage dating back to circa 1800

**ROOMS** Living room, open-plan kitchen-dining room, two bedrooms, bathroom

**LOCATION**
Mousehole, Cornwall

**LIVING ROOM**

**'Every year, we make it a tradition to get together as a family to put up the Christmas tree. It really feels like the start of the season for me,' says homeowner Oliver Brown.** Walls in Loft White, Little Greene. Similar tree skirt, John Lewis. Similar wooden desk tables, Goose Home and Garden

LIVING ROOM

**The family have collected several maritime prints and coastal landscapes to display. An upturned vintage zinc dolly tub makes a quirky side table.**

Sofa and chairs, Loaf. Similar vintage dolly tub, Ardingly Antiques Market. Similar prints, Antique Maps and Prints

While holidaying in the pretty Cornish coastal village of Mousehole, Oliver and Laura Brown chanced upon an enchanting cottage with a For Sale sign attached. 'We had been visiting Mousehole for many years and had always dreamed of having a home by the sea,' says Oliver. 'On a trip back in 2021, we noticed this beautiful cottage for sale on the seafront. We went for a viewing and knew within seconds of walking through the door that it was perfect for us.'

As soon as the house was theirs, the couple began transforming it, opting for a characterful but easy-to-live-with vibe throughout, offset with a few luxurious touches. Kailani, as the cottage is known, acts as the perfect holiday retreat for Oliver and Laura, and they also let it out for others to enjoy as a short-term rental through Unique Homestays.

Inside, Kailani is the epitome of relaxed coastal chic, with whitewashed walls providing the backdrop for a palette of pale neutrals, weathered furniture pieces, vintage accessories and a smattering of nautical finds. 'Our decorating style is a mix of modern and coastal elements. We use natural textures and colours inspired by the sea, including soft whites and blues, along with warm wooden accents,' Oliver says. At Christmas, the pared-back, snow-white interior lends itself beautifully to all the magic and sparkle of the season. Rustic textures and natural foliage abound, accentuated by twinkly lights and the soft glow of a candle or lantern. 'We focus on creating a warm and festive feel while keeping the overall simplicity of the house intact.'

The cottage exudes a wonderful sense of cosiness and delivers big on welcome when the open-plan

> 'WE FOCUS ON CREATING A FESTIVE FEEL WHILE KEEPING THE OVERALL SIMPLICITY AND CALM OF THE HOUSE INTACT'

**DINING AREA**

**Low ceilings and tiny windows add charm. Sheepskins offer an extra layer of winter warmth for guests.**

Vintage table and Tolix chairs sourced from a local flea market; table upcycled with Osmo White Polyx-Oil. Sheepskins, The Treasury in Falmouth living and dining space are filled with family and friends. 'Kailani's layout is great for hosting during the festive season. The large living area is perfect for gatherings and the sea views provide a beautiful backdrop. The kitchen is well-equipped for cooking big, festive meals, making entertaining easy and enjoyable,' Oliver says. There's also a wood-burning stove and a generous stash of blankets and throws ready for chilly winter nights.

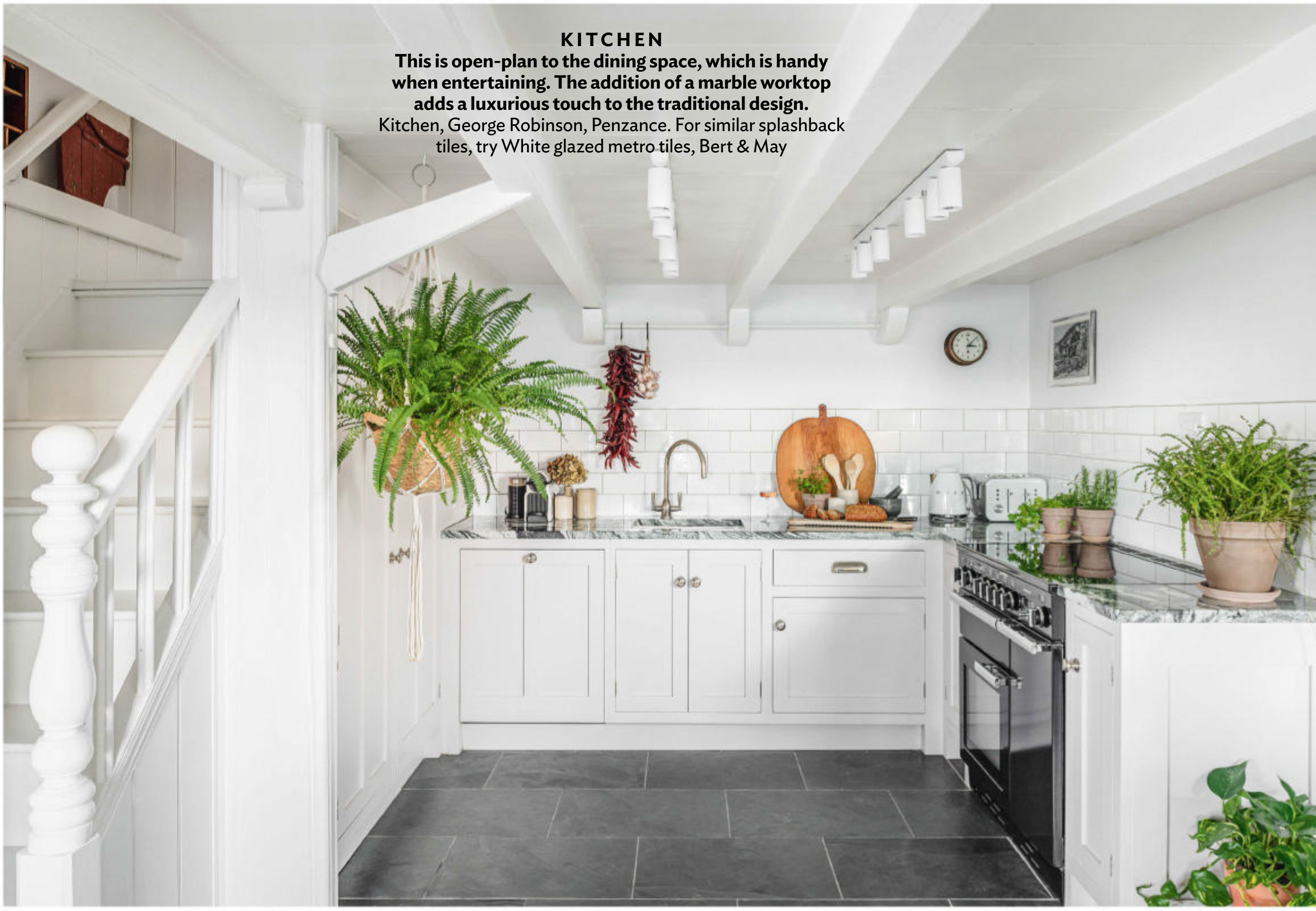
The charm of the old fisherman's cottage continues upstairs, with vintage framed artwork of sailboats and ships and coastal seascapes displayed on the landing. The two bedrooms have all the character one might expect, with sloping ceilings and tiny shuttered windows that act like apertures, revealing the expansive ocean beyond. 'Kailani gives you the best of both worlds; the peace of being by the coast alongside the comfort of a modern, stylish home,' adds Oliver.

Being regulars to the village also means the family feels a part of the strong local community, particularly in the 'out of season' winter months, when the influx of tourists has departed and there are festive rituals and traditions aplenty. 'Christmas beside the sea really does feel special,' Oliver muses. 'The Mousehole Christmas lights are a big highlight, bringing a festive atmosphere to the whole village.'

And as for the big day itself? 'A typical Christmas Day starts with an early morning walk, followed by a big breakfast and opening presents. Then we head to the pub for a drink before lunch and end the evening relaxing by the fire, watching a Christmas movie.' The perfect coastal Christmas... ㉕

*Kailani can be booked via uniquehomestays.com*

**'WHAT I REALLY ENJOY MOST IS THE SENSE OF PEACE THE HOUSE PROVIDES – IT'S A REAL ESCAPE FROM EVERYDAY LIFE'**



**KITCHEN**

**This is open-plan to the dining space, which is handy when entertaining. The addition of a marble worktop adds a luxurious touch to the traditional design.**

Kitchen, George Robinson, Penzance. For similar splashback tiles, try White glazed metro tiles, Bert & May

BEDROOM

**The bed is positioned to make the most of the gorgeous view out to sea.**

Walls in Loft White by Little Greene. Original BTC wall lights, Amos Lighting. Similar framed map, Antique Maps & Prints

LANDING

**Original beams along with all surfaces have painted white to create a light, airy feel throughout. Pretty vintage seascapes add to the nautical feel.**

Try Love Antiques for seascape oil paintings

TWIN BEDROOM

**Comfortable layers in soft neutral tones add warmth to the crisp white bed linen. A vintage ship's light brings another nautical touch.**

Similar bed linen, The White Company. Similar vintage zinc drum and light, Ardingly Antiques Fair

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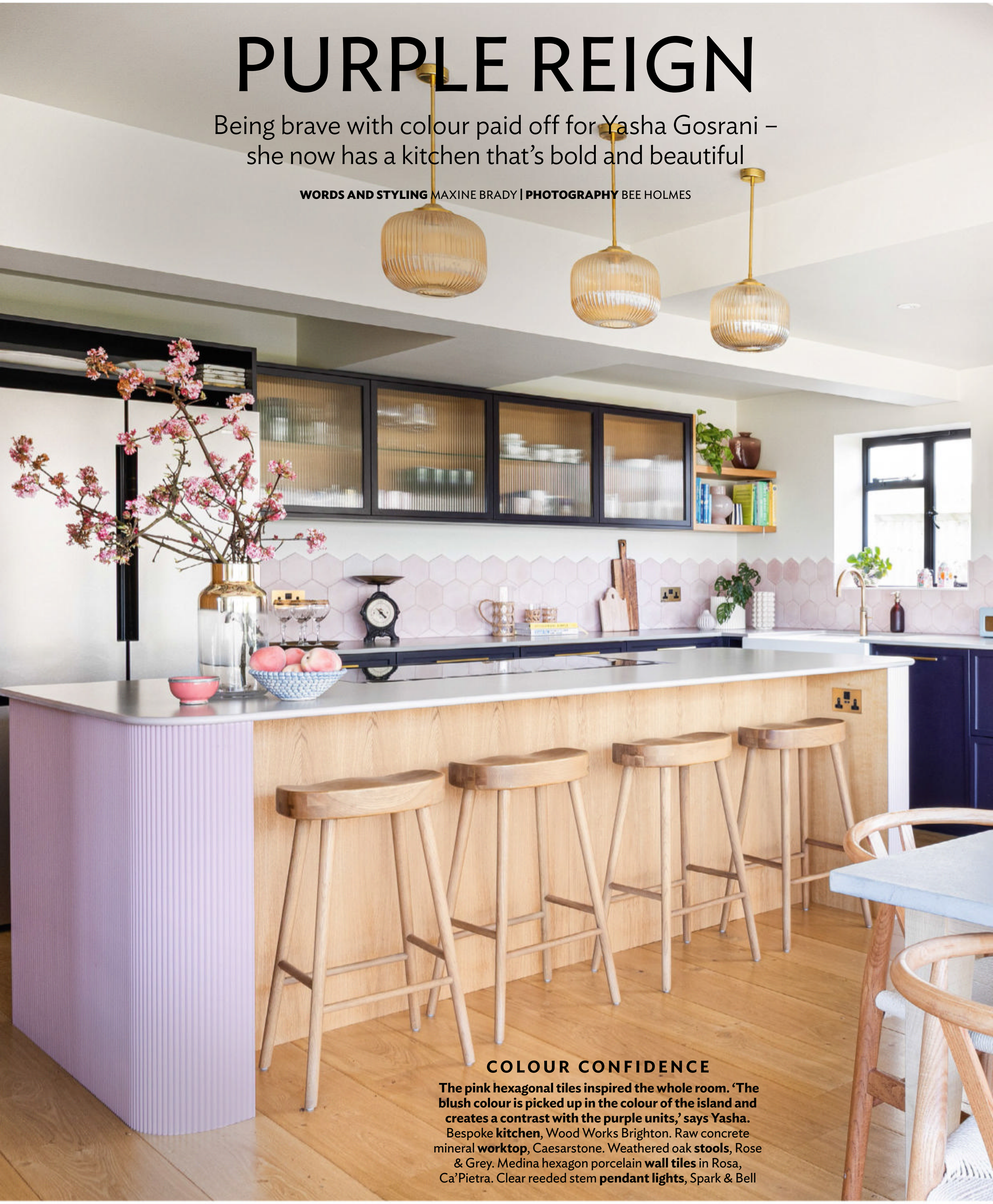
# PURPLE REIGN

Being brave with colour paid off for Yasha Gosrani – she now has a kitchen that's bold and beautiful

**WORDS AND STYLING** MAXINE BRADY | **PHOTOGRAPHY** BEE HOLMES



### COLOUR CONFIDENCE

**The pink hexagonal tiles inspired the whole room. 'The blush colour is picked up in the colour of the island and creates a contrast with the purple units,' says Yasha.** Bespoke **kitchen**, Wood Works Brighton. Raw concrete mineral **worktop**, Caesarstone. Weathered oak **stools**, Rose & Grey. Medina hexagon porcelain **wall tiles** in Rosa, Ca'Pietra. Clear reeded stem **pendant lights**, Spark & Bell

## no. 15

### PROJECT DETAILS

**OWNERS**
Yasha Gosrani lives here with her partner David and their seven-year-old son

**PROPERTY**
1930s house

**WORK**
New kitchen

**LOCATION**
East Sussex

When Yasha moved to her new home, she found the interior uninspiring. The kitchen looked impressive in the estate agent's photos, but it hadn't been designed with a young family in mind. 'There wasn't enough storage and everything felt very plain,' she says.

### 1 TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE

'For such a big room, there wasn't much kitchen to speak of,' says Yasha. 'Limited counter space made prep a challenge, mealtimes felt stressful and laundry often piled up. The uPVC white plastic doors leading to the garden were cold and unwelcoming and blocked much of the view to the garden. After two years of trying to make this room work, we wanted to make changes so this kitchen felt like ours.'

### 2 INSPIRATION SOURCES

Yasha started saving ideas on Pinterest, initially exploring muted colours but later opting for richer tones inspired by flowers and nature. 'My paternal grandmother, Dadi, who was very house-proud, had a proper pantry, so having one of my own was on the top of my wish list,' explains Yasha.

### 3 EXPANSION PLANS

Yasha contacted Halcyon Building to help with the redesign and work got underway, with plans to borrow space from the garage to create a utility room, expand the kitchen without extending and create a hidden pantry by moving the boiler. However, not everything went smoothly at the start of the project, with delays on the delivery and installation of the windows and doors having a domino effect on the entire build. 'We had an opening at the back of the house for six weeks,' explains Yasha. 'It was quite chaotic, but luckily for us it was spring, so we didn't freeze!' Once the plasterers came, we could see the light at the end of the tunnel. That's when the project finally shifted from destruction to creativity for me.'

### 4 FAMILY FAVOURITE

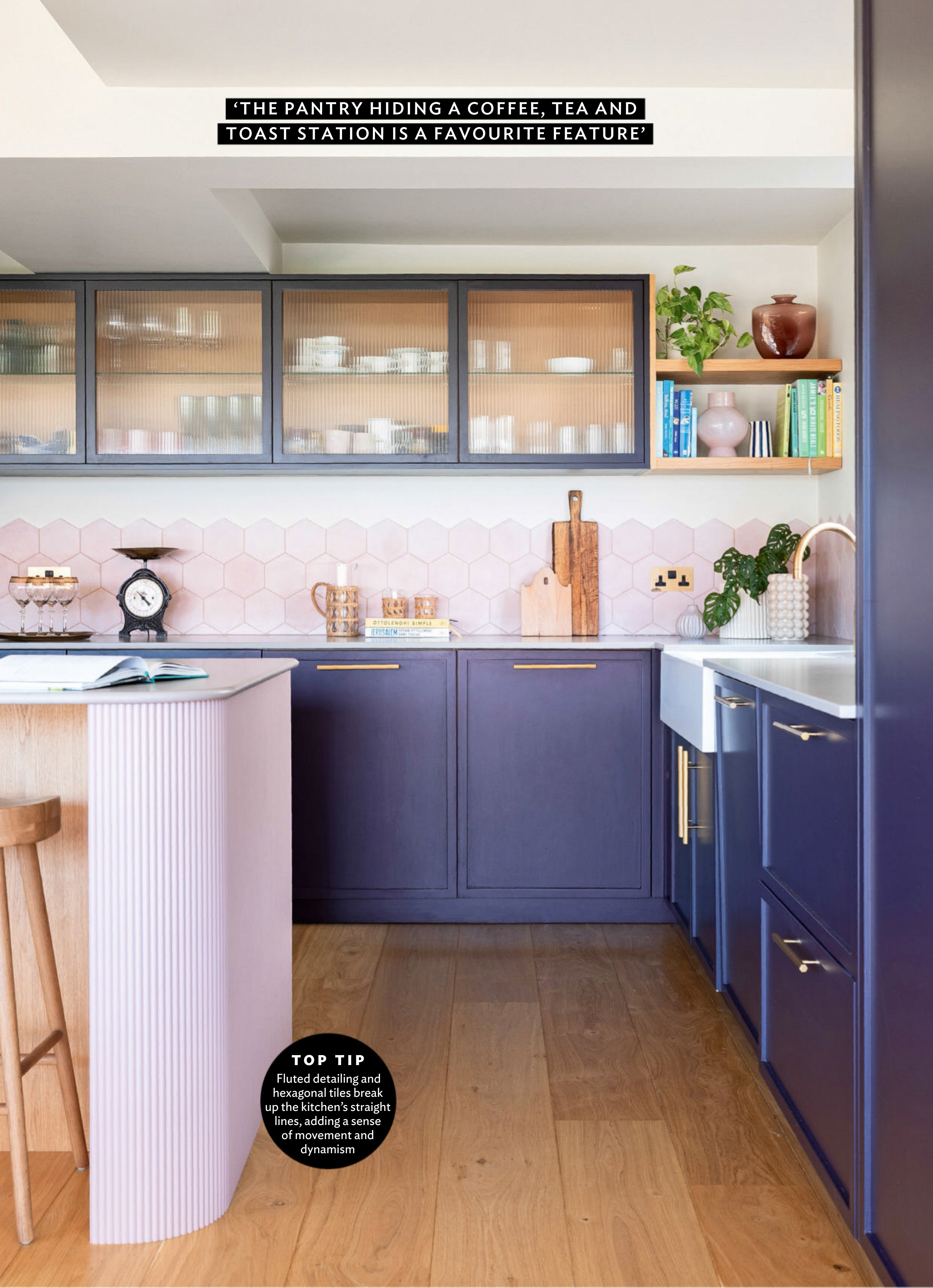
The result is dramatic – what was once a source of frustration has now become a sanctuary in their home and an impractical kitchen has been replaced with a sleek and functional design. 'This room comes into its own when we host play dates as children love to run around the kitchen island and "steal" snacks from the pantry. And in the summer months, we open the doors onto the garden when we host friends,' says Yasha. 'This kitchen feels very authentic to us.'

*@interiors_by_yasha; halcyonbuilding.co.uk*

## BRIGHT IDEA

**'I sourced flush ceiling lights that wouldn't distract from the outlook over the garden,' says Yasha. 'I found these ceiling lights from a designer based in Cornwall.'**

The Mira **dining table**, John Lewis, is similar. **Dining chairs**, Nordina Home. Speckled Cream Matt Dawn **ceiling light** in Ceramic and Oak, Studio Haran. Fusion round hot **tap** in Patinated Brass, Quooker. Quadron white Belfast **sink**, Olif



> ‘THE PANTRY HIDING A COFFEE, TEA AND TOAST STATION IS A FAVOURITE FEATURE’

**TOP TIP**

Fluted detailing and hexagonal tiles break up the kitchen’s straight lines, adding a sense of movement and dynamism

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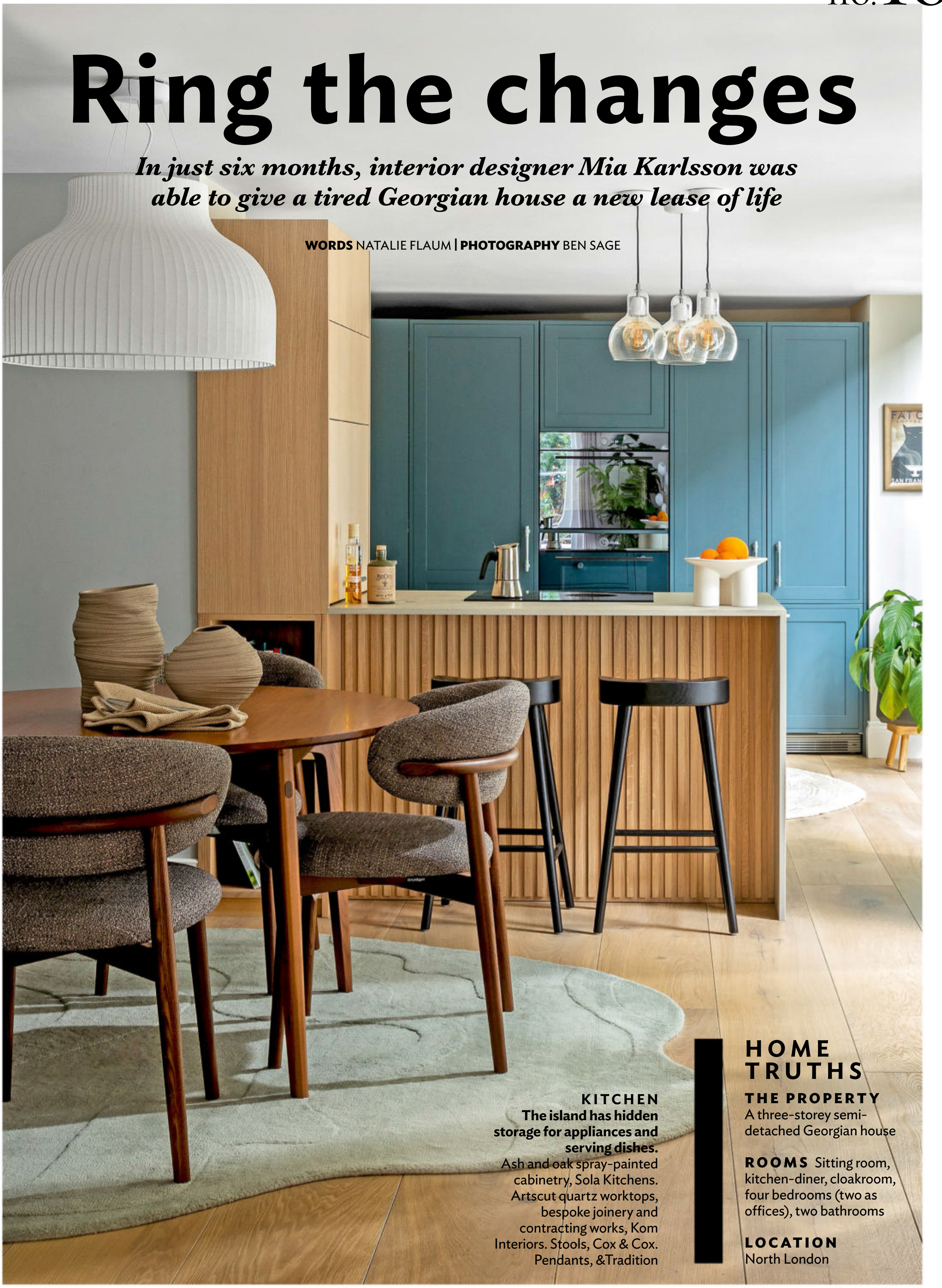
no.16

# Ring the changes

*In just six months, interior designer Mia Karlsson was able to give a tired Georgian house a new lease of life*

**WORDS** NATALIE FLAUM | **PHOTOGRAPHY** BEN SAGE



**KITCHEN**
**The island has hidden storage for appliances and serving dishes.** Ash and oak spray-painted cabinetry, Sola Kitchens. Artscut quartz worktops, bespoke joinery and contracting works, Kom Interiors. Stools, Cox & Cox. Pendants, &Tradition

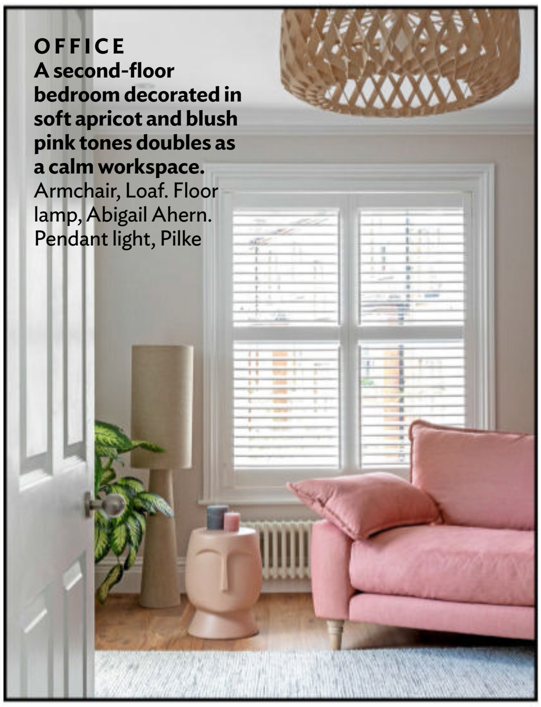
## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** A three-storey semi-detached Georgian house

**ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen-diner, cloakroom, four bedrooms (two as offices), two bathrooms

**LOCATION** North London

**DINING AREA**
**Mia ensured a seamless flow with the use of natural engineered light oak flooring throughout.** Dining table, Cimmermann. Chairs, Calligaris. Rug, Ligne Roset. Pendant, Muuto. Dresser, Anthropologie



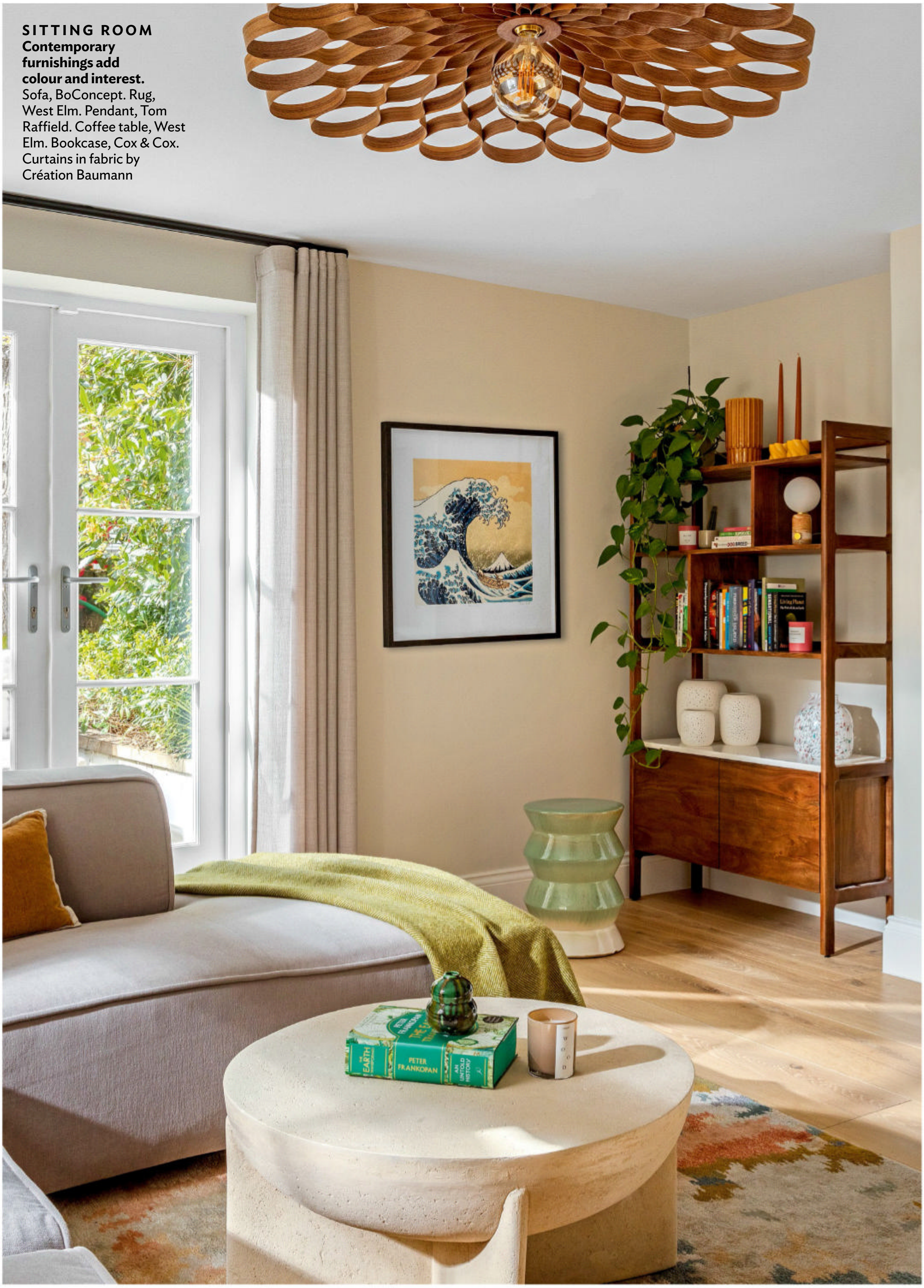
**OFFICE**
**A second-floor bedroom decorated in soft apricot and blush pink tones doubles as a calm workspace.** Armchair, Loaf. Floor lamp, Abigail Ahern. Pendant light, Pilke

Hard to recognise from its former self, this Georgian-style cottage has been transformed from faded and forgotten to bright and beautiful in just six months. Impressed by interior designer Mia Karlsson's talent for creating calm and cohesive spaces, the owners – a young professional couple – handed over the keys and moved out, entrusting Mia with the full transformation. In August 2023 Mia took her clients on a design journey to create a home that told their story – one that blends London living with the couple's European and North American heritage.

Mia's native Northern Swedish design influence manifests in simple, functional and natural solutions. 'I was delighted to take on this project, particularly as I'd only recently moved from Hampstead. With a walled garden at the front, the house has a cosy, private cottage feel – like being in the countryside, yet on London's doorstep.

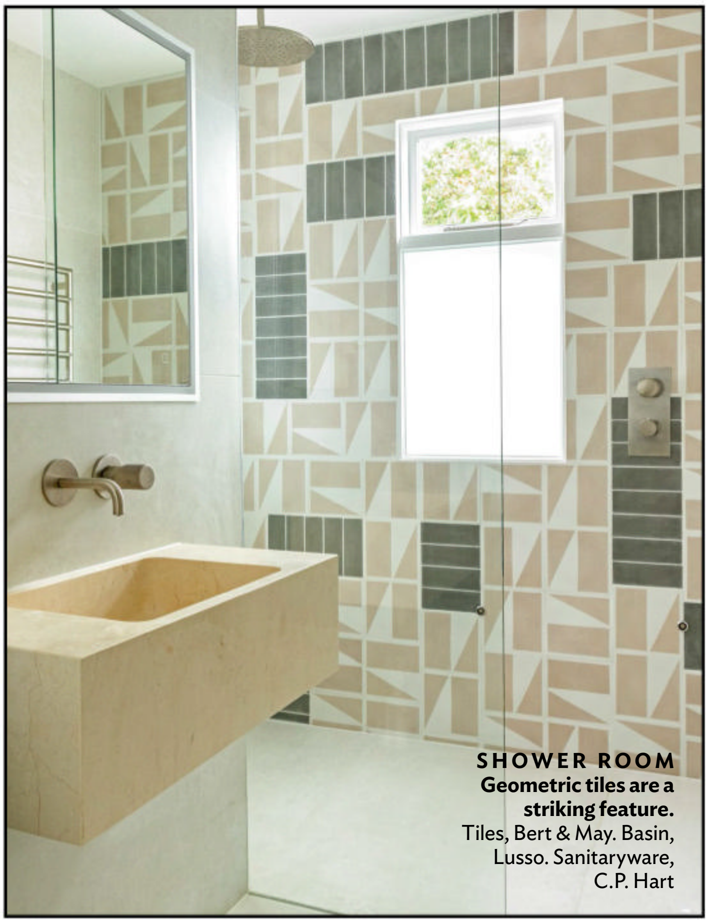
The entrance was once dark and cramped, but Mia removed the former cloakroom in favour of bespoke joinery for shoe storage, luggage and coats. Walls were skimmed to improve the connection between the open-plan living and dining areas, while a new kitchen, crafted from sustainable Swedish wood, features a breakfast bar and a discreet kitchen garage to conceal appliances. A walk-in storage area was cleverly created in an asymmetric corner, with open shelves positioned opposite French doors that lead to a private, intimate outdoor terrace.

'This house is a unique melting pot of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian styles,' explains Mia. 'Unusually set back from the road it has a garage at the side, accessed from the courtyard, which was a brilliant space for



**SITTING ROOM**
**Contemporary furnishings add colour and interest.** Sofa, BoConcept. Rug, West Elm. Pendant, Tom Raffield. Coffee table, West Elm. Bookcase, Cox & Cox. Curtains in fabric by Création Baumann

**MAIN EN SUITE**
**Metal-framed pocket doors with fluted glass filter the light.** Doors and shutters, Kom Interiors. Bouclé bench, Pure White Lines



**SHOWER ROOM**
**Geometric tiles are a striking feature.** Tiles, Bert & May. Basin, Lusso. Sanitaryware, C.P. Hart

**MAIN EN SUITE**
**A free-standing bath adds a luxurious feel.** Bath, Cielo. Mirror, Artelinea. Basin, Kast. Tiles, Porcelain Tiles. Ladder, Next. Riviera Maison III wallpaper by Tektura

deliveries and storage as well as constant supply of electricity during the project.'

Mia has worked closely with contractor Mico Milovic of Kom Interiors for 30 years. 'Mico has worked on all my own properties, he's like a house whisperer,' she adds. 'He knows a building's mythology inside out, and has an almost magical ability to bring them back to life.'

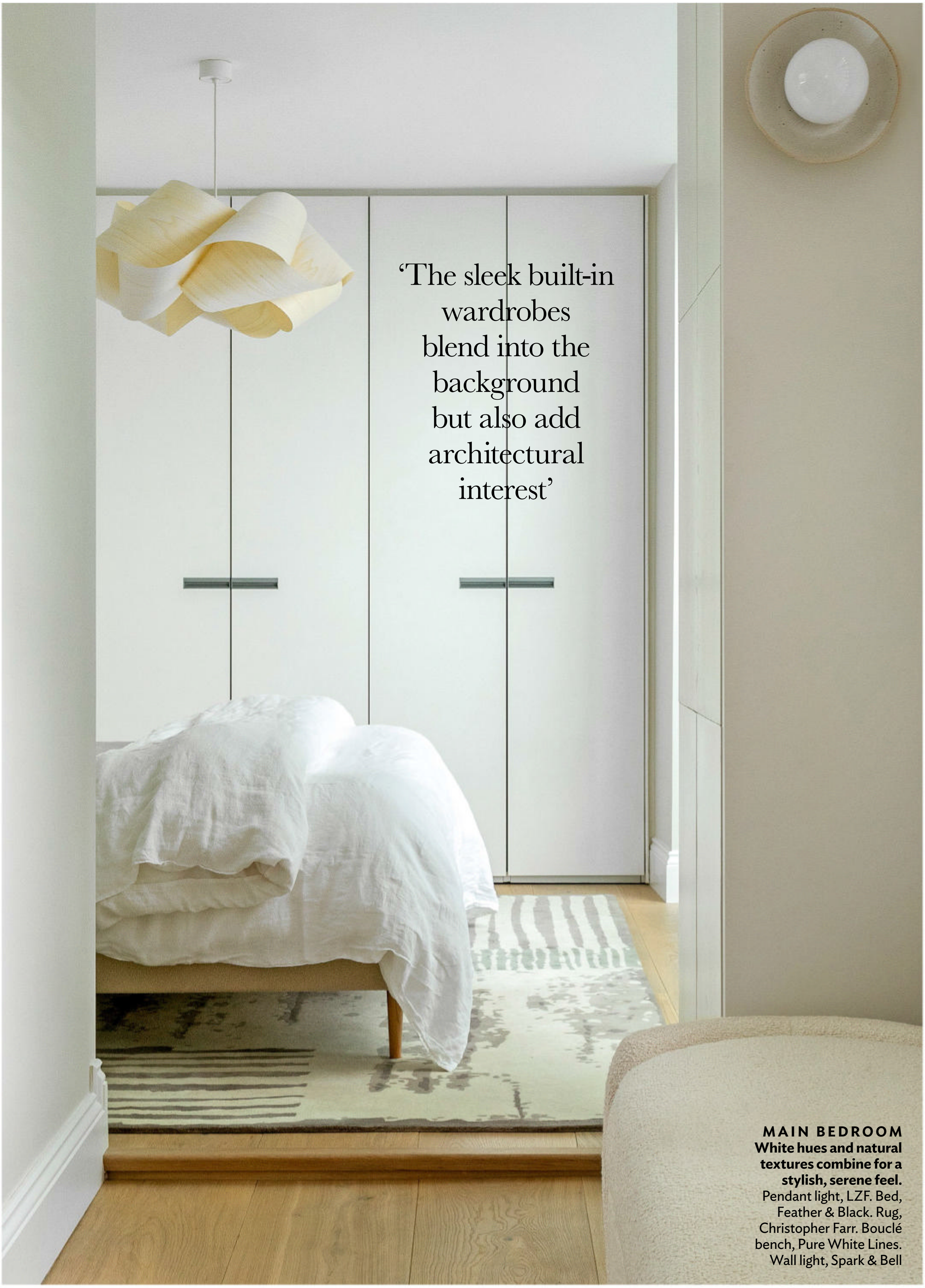
Upstairs, a bedroom was redesigned as a retreat for visiting family. Since the couple work remotely, Mia turned two of the bedrooms into his and hers offices. 'Her office is soft and restful with apricot and blush pink tones and a cosy chair for long calls. His office has a masculine feel, with navy painted walls and a playful display of impressive Lego models.'

In contrast, the main suite is a minimalist sanctuary of calm, defined by white, natural textures, sleek lines and modern glazing. 'With renovations, it's important to pick your battles – some are worth having and some aren't,' says Mia. 'Structural changes to glazing would have been costly, requiring planning permission. So I worked with the existing features.'

The en suite, formerly a dark box with no windows to provide any light, has been turned into a tranquil space with enhanced light and natural elements. The new entrance features metal-framed pocket doors with fluted glass, allowing natural light to flow providing privacy without closing off the space.

'I'm delighted the owners are thrilled and said their home feels like their sanctuary. They love going for dog walks on Hampstead Heath. For me, great interiors are about designing spaces that reflect my clients' feelings and emotions – this is where my pure joy resides.'

*miakarlsson.co.uk*



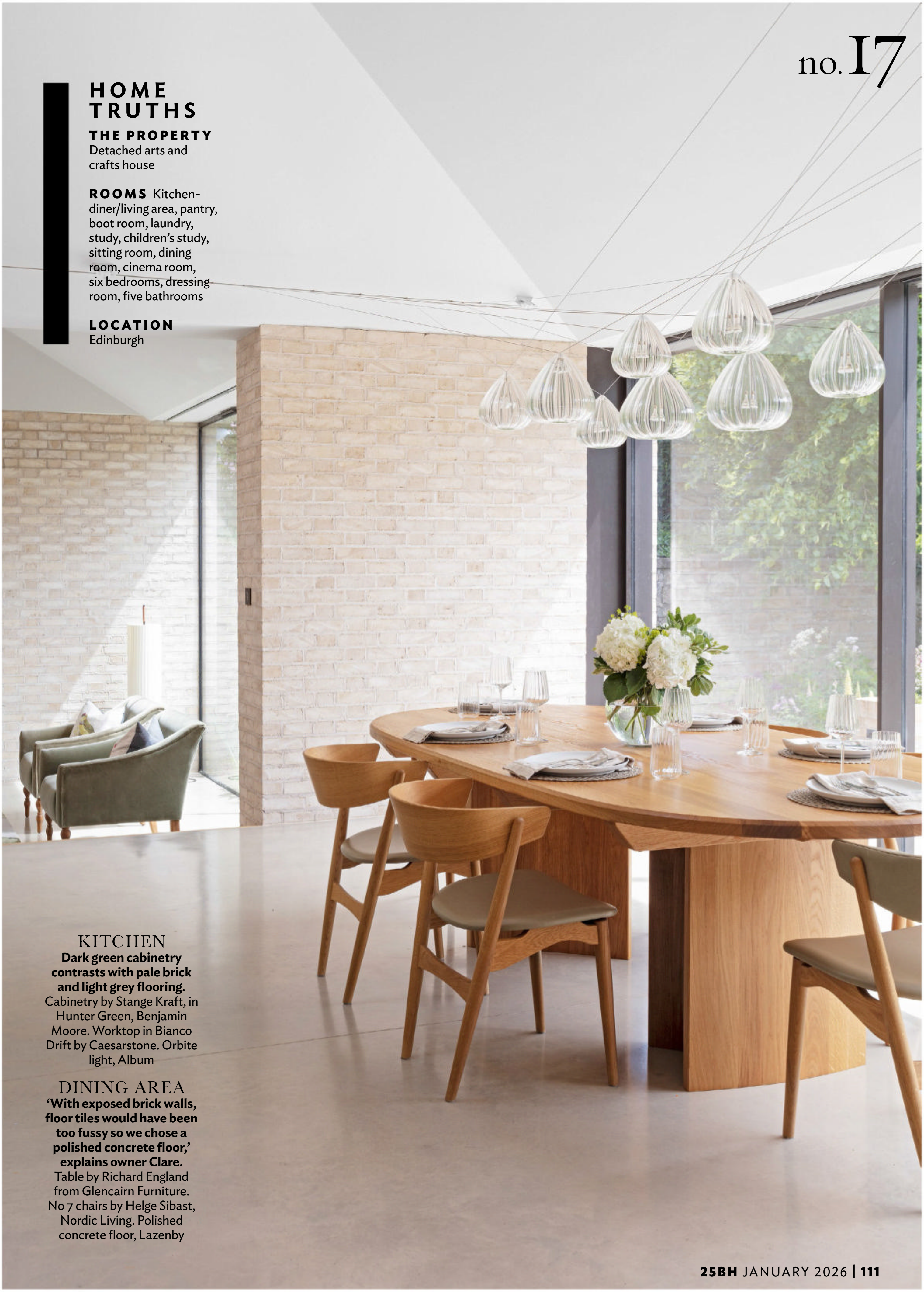
‘The sleek built-in wardrobes blend into the background but also add architectural interest’

**MAIN BEDROOM**
**White hues and natural textures combine for a stylish, serene feel.** Pendant light, LZF. Bed, Feather & Black. Rug, Christopher Farr. Bouclé bench, Pure White Lines. Wall light, Spark & Bell

# *All is* CALM

This arts and crafts house has been reimagined with clever storage and a smart extension, creating stylish and orderly spaces that are easy to relax in

**WORDS** EMMA LEASK | **PHOTOGRAPHY** SUSIE LOWE



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## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** Detached arts and crafts house

**ROOMS** Kitchen-diner/living area, pantry, boot room, laundry, study, children's study, sitting room, dining room, cinema room, six bedrooms, dressing room, five bathrooms

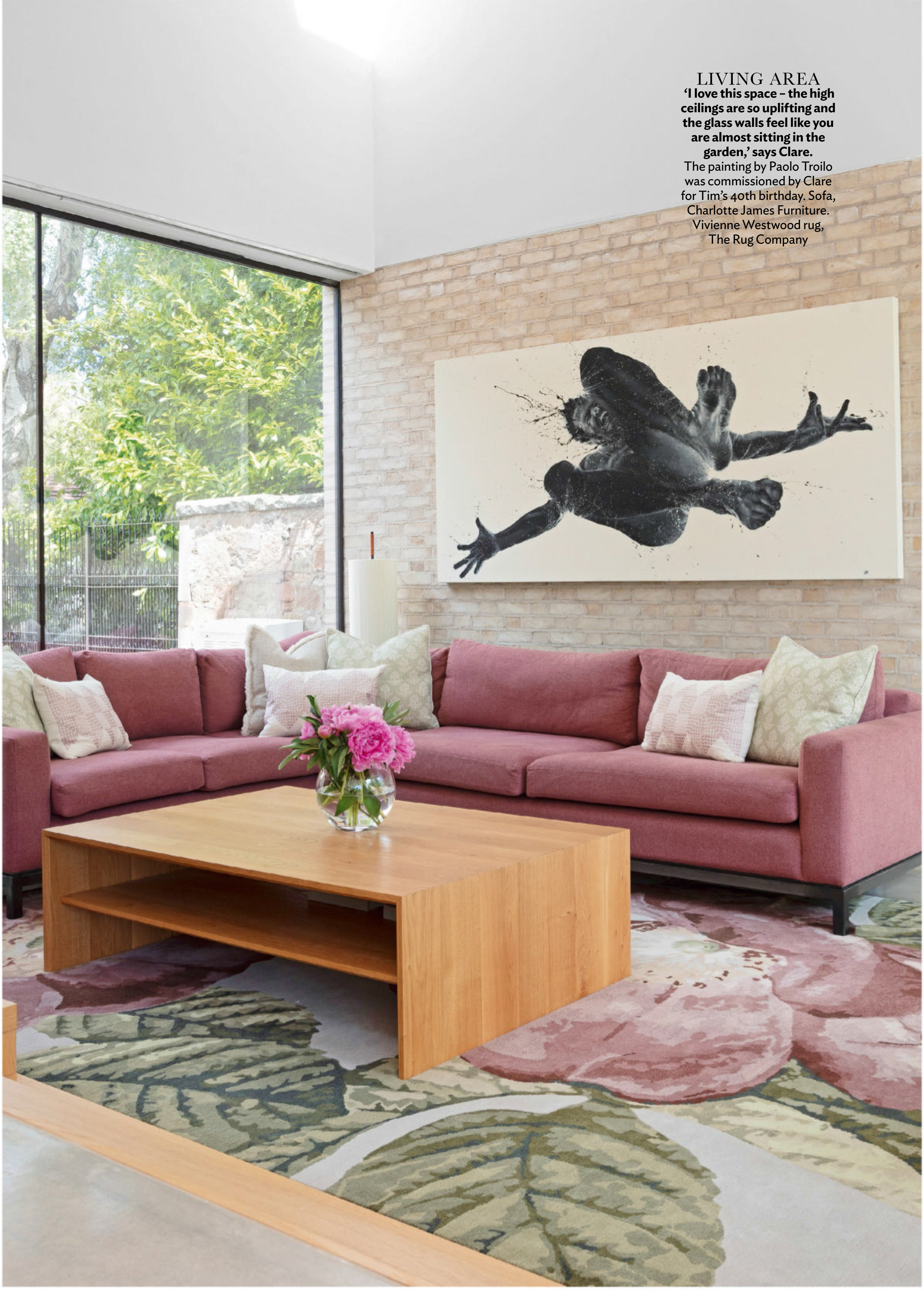
**LOCATION** Edinburgh

### KITCHEN

**Dark green cabinetry contrasts with pale brick and light grey flooring.** Cabinetry by Stange Kraft, in Hunter Green, Benjamin Moore. Worktop in Bianco Drift by Caesarstone. Orbite light, Album

### DINING AREA

**'With exposed brick walls, floor tiles would have been too fussy so we chose a polished concrete floor,' explains owner Clare.** Table by Richard England from Glencairn Furniture. No 7 chairs by Helge Sibast, Nordic Living. Polished concrete floor, Lazenby



LIVING AREA
**'I love this space – the high ceilings are so uplifting and the glass walls feel like you are almost sitting in the garden,' says Clare.** The painting by Paolo Troilo was commissioned by Clare for Tim's 40th birthday. Sofa, Charlotte James Furniture. Vivienne Westwood rug, The Rug Company

Ask Clare Pharoah what she loves about her house and she replies without hesitation… 'more space'. Along with her husband Tim, a consultant, and their three children, they traded their London Victorian semi for a six-bedroom arts and crafts house with a large garden and tennis court in a leafy area of Edinburgh.

Typical of its era, the house had old-fashioned formal living spaces and a small kitchen. 'With three children we decided to build an open-plan kitchen that would be the heart of the home,' explains Clare, a lawyer turned stay-at-home mum to Chloe, 13, Grace, nine, and Elliott, six.

The couple's brief for Seán Gaule and Tom Armistead from Somner Macdonald Architects included 'lots of light and glass, a dressing room and lots of storage – we wanted a functional house for easy family living,' says Clare.

Along with building the 100m2 extension, the original three-storey house was completely refurbished with Clare enlisting interior designer Jane Perfect 'to help pull it all together'.

'Tim and I wanted a house full of bright colour and light. We like rich fabrics, interesting textures and wow factor through colour or lighting,' says Clare, who hung contemporary chandeliers in most rooms, including the bathrooms. 'Jane visited us in London to help us decide which furniture and rugs to bring. She was good at including us in the process.'

Dark green kitchen cabinetry was the couple's must-have, set off by pale brick walls. With a gallery-like pyramid ceiling, the kitchen feels calming and almost ecclesiastical. But how to hang a pendant light? 'The choice was either spotlights or a pendant hanging at a

'We wanted lots of light and glass, a dressing room and lots of storage – a functional house for easy family living'

1 SITTING ROOM
**The showstopper in this large space is a glass chandelier. The room overlooks the garden and tennis court and leads to the conservatory, which the couple use as a gym.**
Sofas and chairs by Charlotte James Furniture. Textured Tasar wallpaper, Arte. Chandelier, Tom Kirk

2 CHILDREN'S STUDY
**With two girls who enjoy arts and crafts, Clare turned a sitting room into a creative space, with bespoke cabinetry made to her design.**
Cabinetry by Stange Kraft, in Reign Blue, Zoffany. Evo-C chairs, Vitra

3 BOOT ROOM
**The dark green colour scheme used throughout the property extends to this space for continuity.**
Cabinetry by Stange Kraft. Decorative brass grilles, Armac Martin

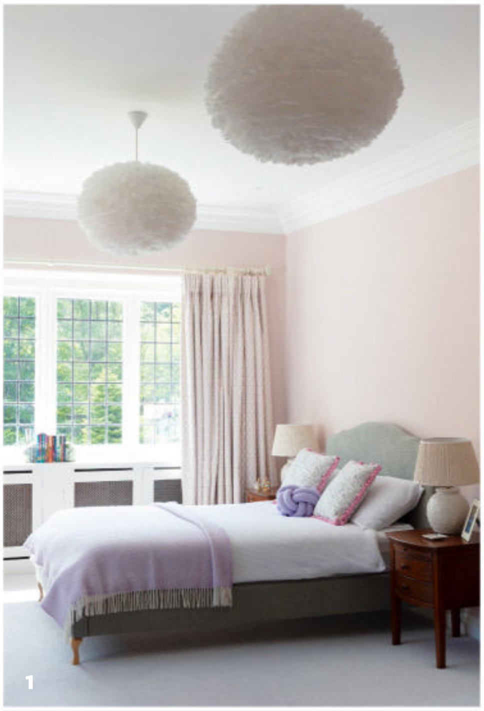
4 BATHROOM
**Clare wanted this small room to pack a big punch so chose a bold wallpaper design featuring trees.**
Forest wallpaper, Cole & Son. Fresnel wall light, Jonathan Coles

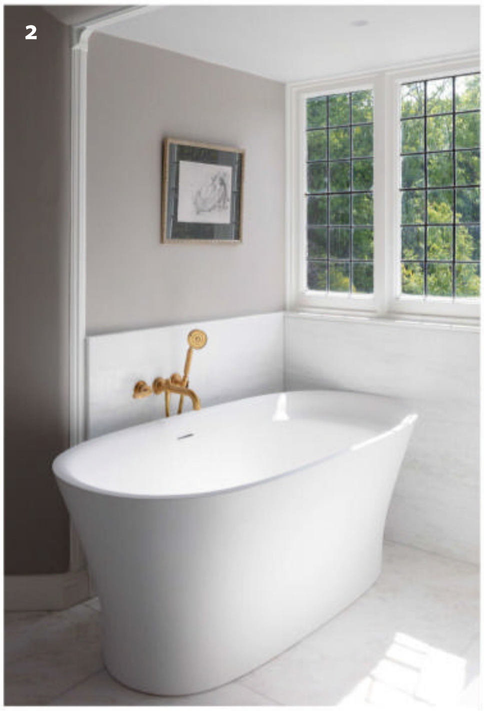
### 1 GRACE'S BEDROOM

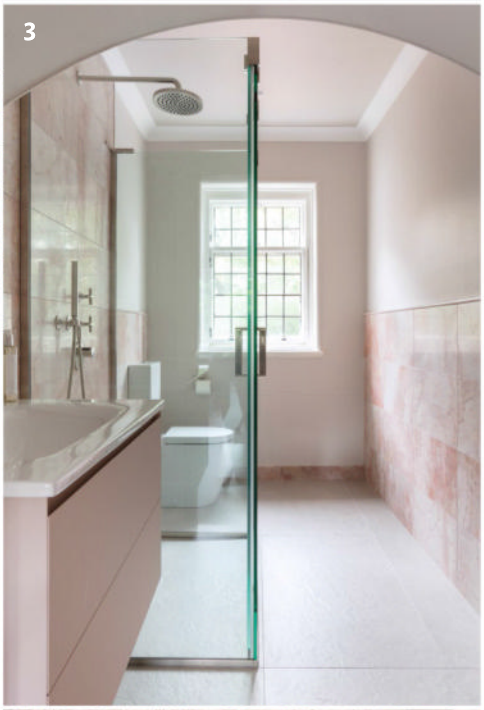
**This pretty scheme features soft pink walls and statement pendant lights made from natural goose feathers. With views of the garden and the tennis court, it also has an en-suite bathroom with shower.**
Walls in Calamine, Farrow & Ball.
Eos pendant lights, Umage

### 2 MAIN EN SUITE

**The luxurious bathroom has a classic-contemporary feel, with extra-large marble floor tiles and a modern free-standing bathtub. Industrial-style brass tapware has a natural patina that will age beautifully over time.**
Tapware, Samuel Heath. Free-standing bath, Duravit. Marble floor and wall tiles, Stoneworld





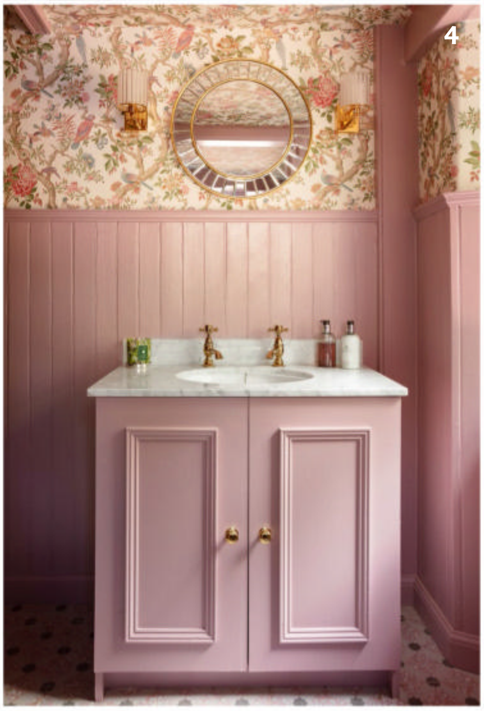


### 3 GRACE'S EN SUITE

**'We wanted a bathroom that flowed from Grace's bedroom that was sophisticated rather than girly,' says Clare, 'so chose pale pink marble and a more muted colour palette. We found the pink marble very quickly, loved it and chose the rest of the bathroom around that marble.'**
Floor tiles; Rosalina honed marble wall tiles, Mandarin Stone. Walls and ceiling in Skimming Stone, Farrow & Ball. Vanity unit by Cubik. Glass shower surround, Matki. Vaia shower fittings, Dornbracht

### 4 BATHROOM

**For a cosy look, Clare retained the original wall panelling and added bird wallpaper, which she found at Design Centre Chelsea Harbour in London, continuing it on the ceiling.**
Eltham Antique wallpaper, GP & J Baker



> 'If everything has a place it makes life massively easier – I'm incredibly happy with the renovation'

weird angle from the sloping ceiling,' says Tim. Eventually, he found Album's Orbite light, which is suspended from wires spanning the walls. 'Clare had her doubts, but the wires are unobtrusive. Thankfully she loves it now – but it really blew our electrician's mind!'

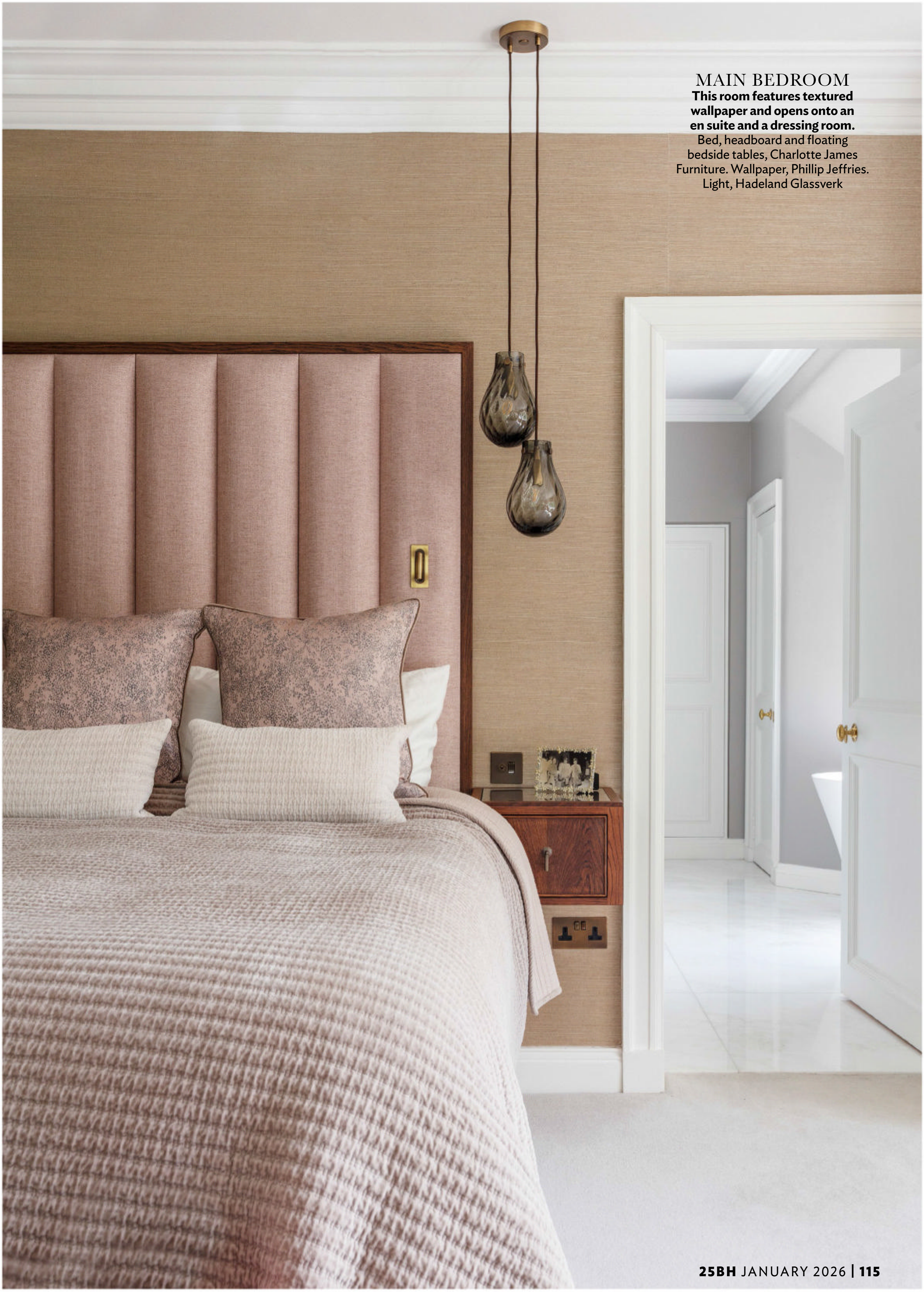
Six-year-old Elliott has a safari-style bedroom with blue wallpaper. 'We wanted furniture and wallpaper that wouldn't have to be changed five years down the line,' says Clare. 'A smoky blue is a timeless choice for a boy's room, growing with them from toddler to teen,' adds Jane. 'Later, layer in grey accents for a more mature look.'

A bedroom was knocked through to create Clare's dream dressing room. 'I had planned this space before we even found the house,' Clare laughs. 'In London we had little storage – I had to keep clothes under the bed which I swapped seasonally to a wardrobe.'

The dressing room is fabulous. Glass-fronted cupboards and open shelving display shoes and bags and an island unit is topped with marble floor slabs, leftover from the bathroom. It was a 'group effort' between Clare, Jane and craftsman Uwe Stange, who along with architects Seán, Tom and builder Orocco, Clare says were all 'brilliant' to work with. 'I liked the idea of fabric on the wardrobes and Jane found an Arte linen which was perfect. Brass was too expensive so Uwe suggested walnut beading. We are quite tidy freaks – if everything has a place it makes life easier. I'm incredibly happy with it.'

Without doubt, the refurbishment and extension have transformed family life. 'I love all the storage,' says Clare. 'Tim and I are quite practical; we think family harmony can only be increased when the house is organised.'

*janeperfectinteriors.com; somnermacdonald.co.uk; orocco.co.uk*

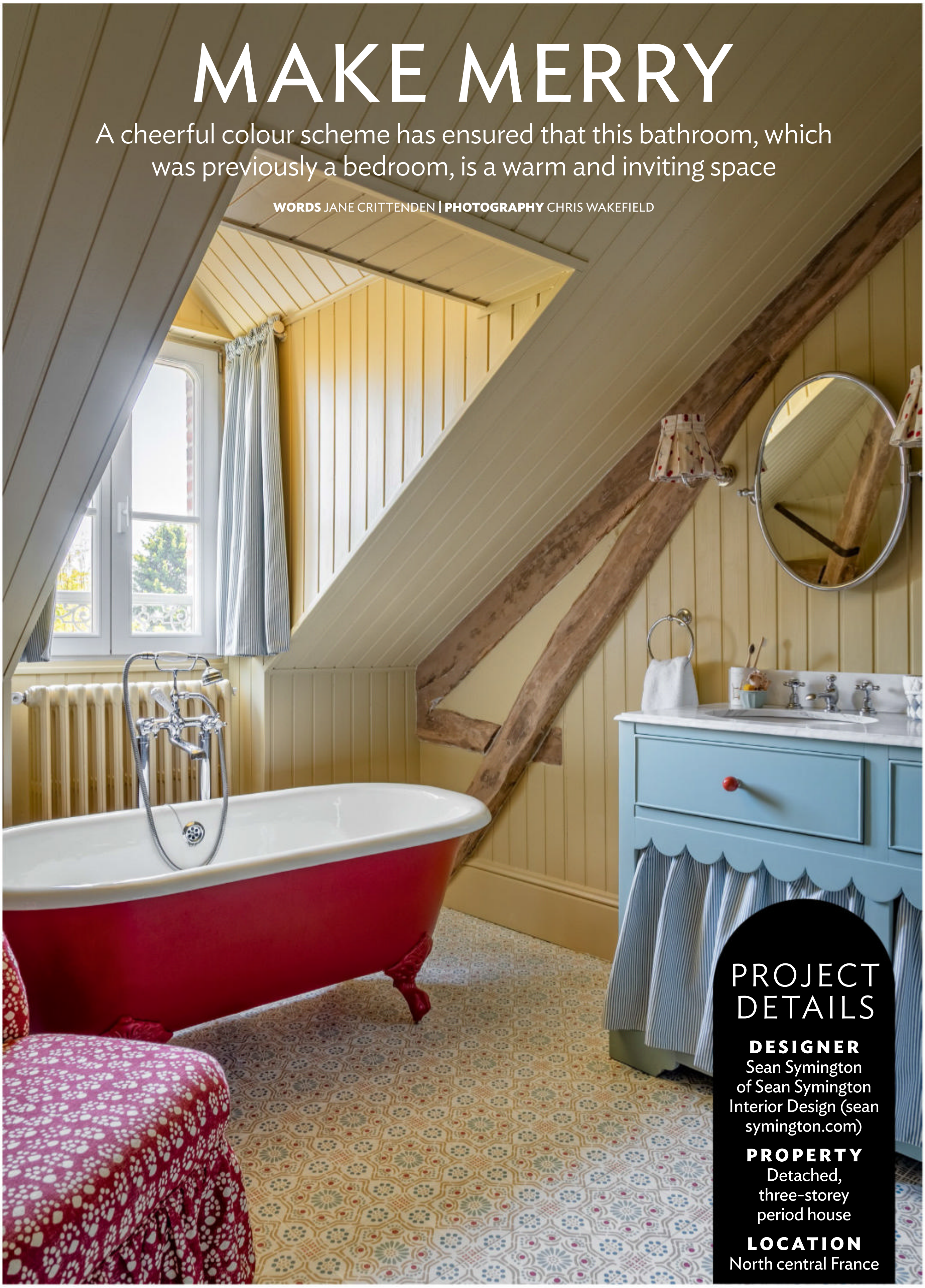


MAIN BEDROOM
**This room features textured wallpaper and opens onto an en suite and a dressing room.** Bed, headboard and floating bedside tables, Charlotte James Furniture. Wallpaper, Phillip Jeffries. Light, Hadeland Glassverk

# MAKE MERRY

A cheerful colour scheme has ensured that this bathroom, which was previously a bedroom, is a warm and inviting space

**WORDS** JANE CRITTENDEN | **PHOTOGRAPHY** CHRIS WAKEFIELD

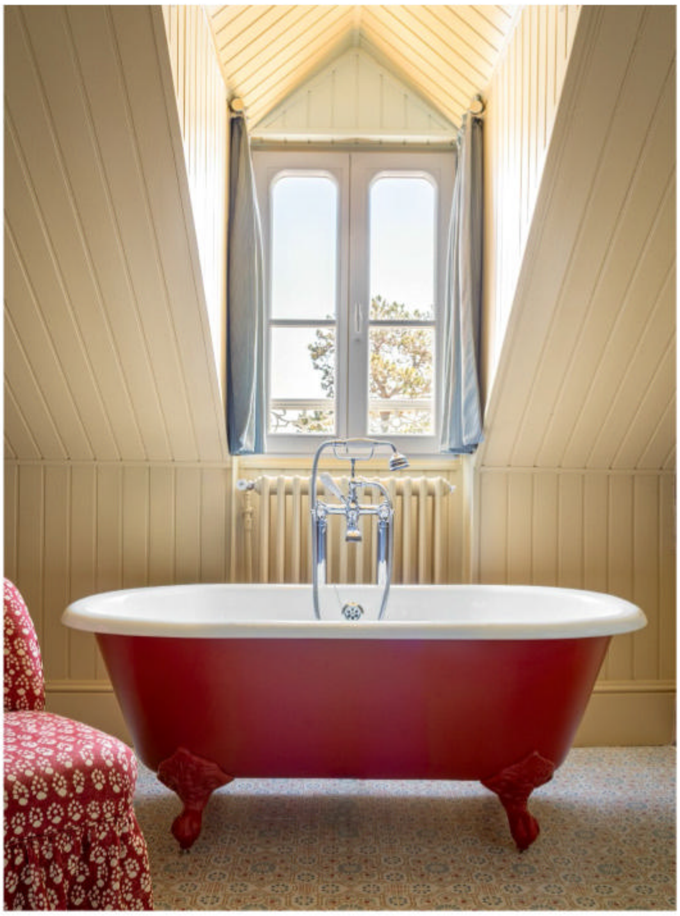


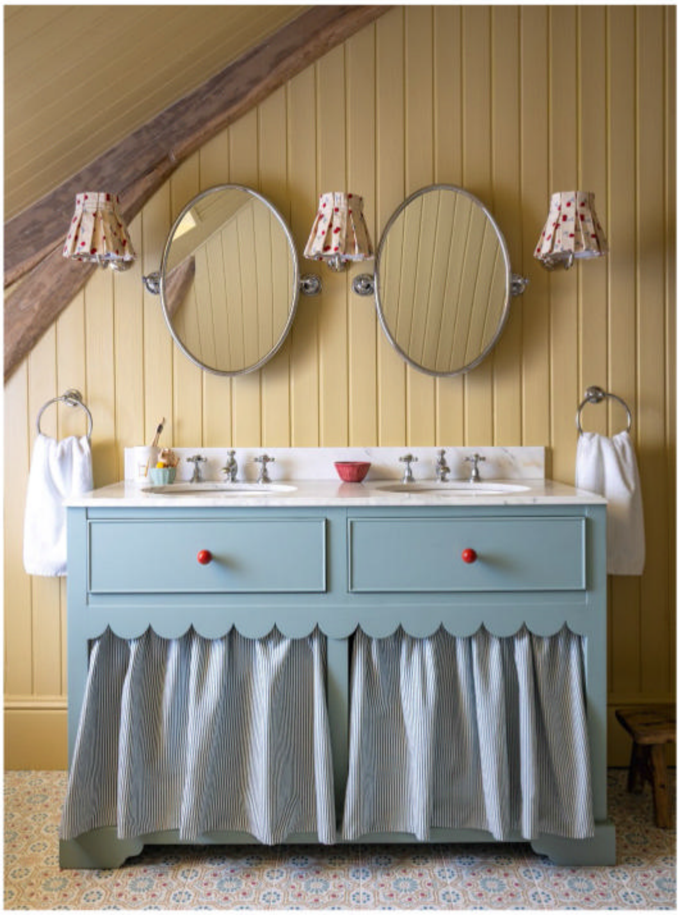
## PROJECT DETAILS

**DESIGNER**
Sean Symington of Sean Symington Interior Design (seansymington.com)

**PROPERTY**
Detached, three-storey period house

**LOCATION**
North central France





After relocating from London back to France with their two children, one couple decided to enlist designer Sean Symington to refurbish their kids' bathroom. They had seen his work in a friend's house and knew he was the one for the job.

## 1 LAYOUT PLANS

The sloping ceiling of the room limited the amount of head height available and meant planning carefully to make the most of the space. 'We used the two tall walls for the shower and the vanity so we had space for a mirror and lighting above,' says Sean. 'The red claw foot bath draws your eye as you come into the room.'

## 2 DECORATING INSPIRATION

The homeowner fell in love with a Nina Campbell tile inspired by Moorish architecture. Sean suggested they use the colours as a starting point and build the bathroom scheme from there. 'My client wanted the decor to be youthful but grow with the children,' he says. 'The lively blue, red and pale yellow in the tile pattern was perfect.'

## 3 COLOUR BALANCE

A medley of French blues in the shower tiles, vanity and striped fabric bounces against dusty yellow walls, which brightens and adds warmth to a space that doesn't receive a lot of natural light. 'There's a thread of brighter yellows throughout the house but this subdued yellow tone is great for colour-drenching,' says Sean. 'The red bath is fun but also has an element of sophistication for longevity.'

## 4 FINAL TOUCHES

Cherry fabric lampshades and scallop shapes in Sean's vanity design feed into the playful look, while curtains on portiere rods resolve the problem of inward opening windows. 'We had so much fun on the project – the owners are really nice people,' says Sean. 'They're delighted with the bathroom, which is great for the children now but can be easily transformed in the future with a different colour scheme.' ㉕

### OLD-WORLD CHARM

**'The red bath is the fun colour punch and makes a fantastic focal point beneath the window,' says Sean.** **Vanity** design and build, Sean Symington Interior Design. Claw foot **bath**, Cast Iron Bath Company. **Bath** in Rectory Red; **vanity unit** in Oval Room Blue; **walls** in Hay, all Farrow & Ball. Vanity **curtain in** Oswin cotton stripe in Robin Egg, Romo. Red **knobs**, Matilda Goad & Co. Nina Campbell Ronda porcelain **tiles** in Coral Aqua, Fired Earth. **Chair in** Paw Print linen in Raspberry, Soane Britain. Embroidered Green Cherry cotton **lampshades**, Alice Palmer & Co. Burlington nickel **taps**, Hudson Reed

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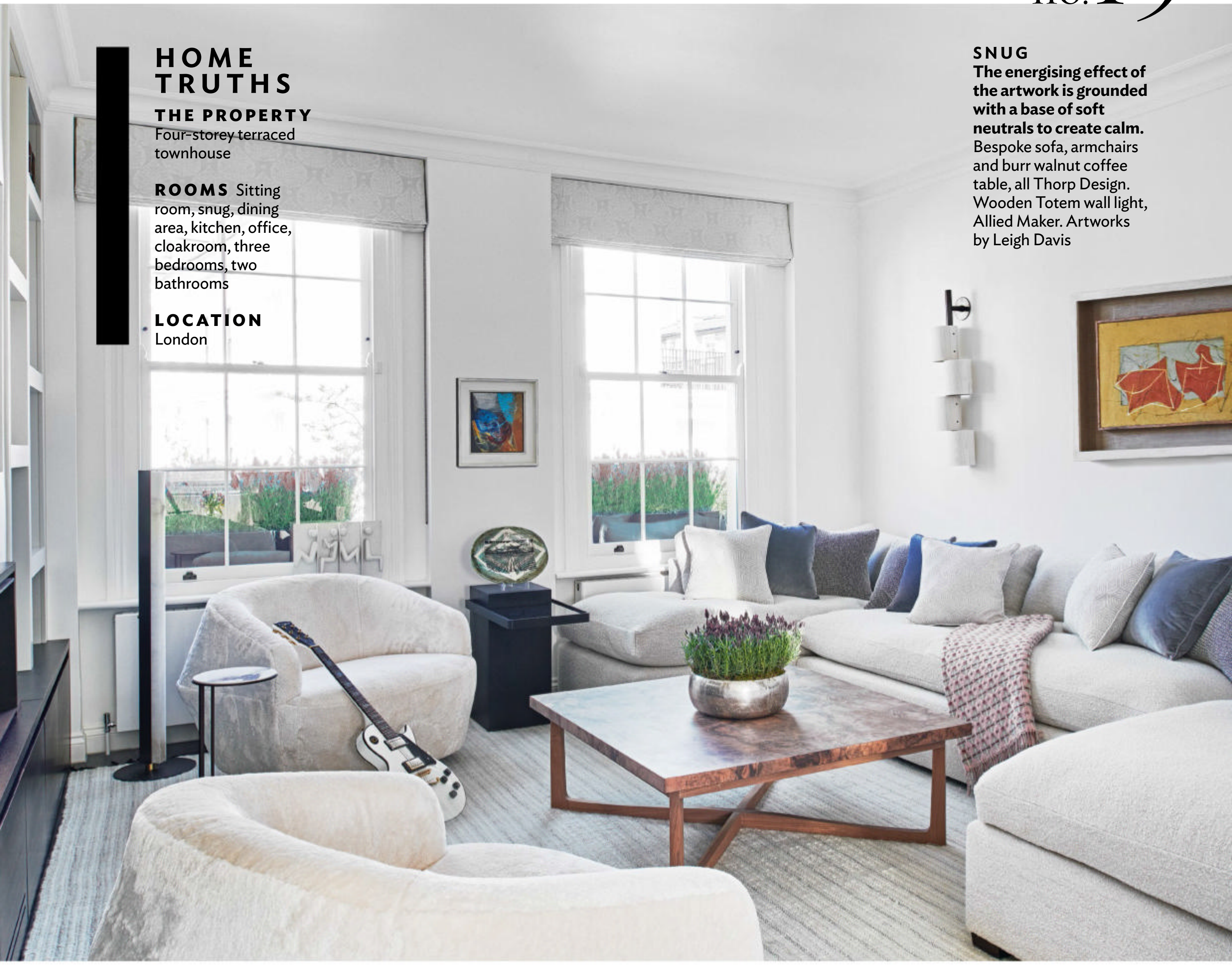


### HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**
Four-storey terraced townhouse

**ROOMS** Sitting room, snug, dining area, kitchen, office, cloakroom, three bedrooms, two bathrooms

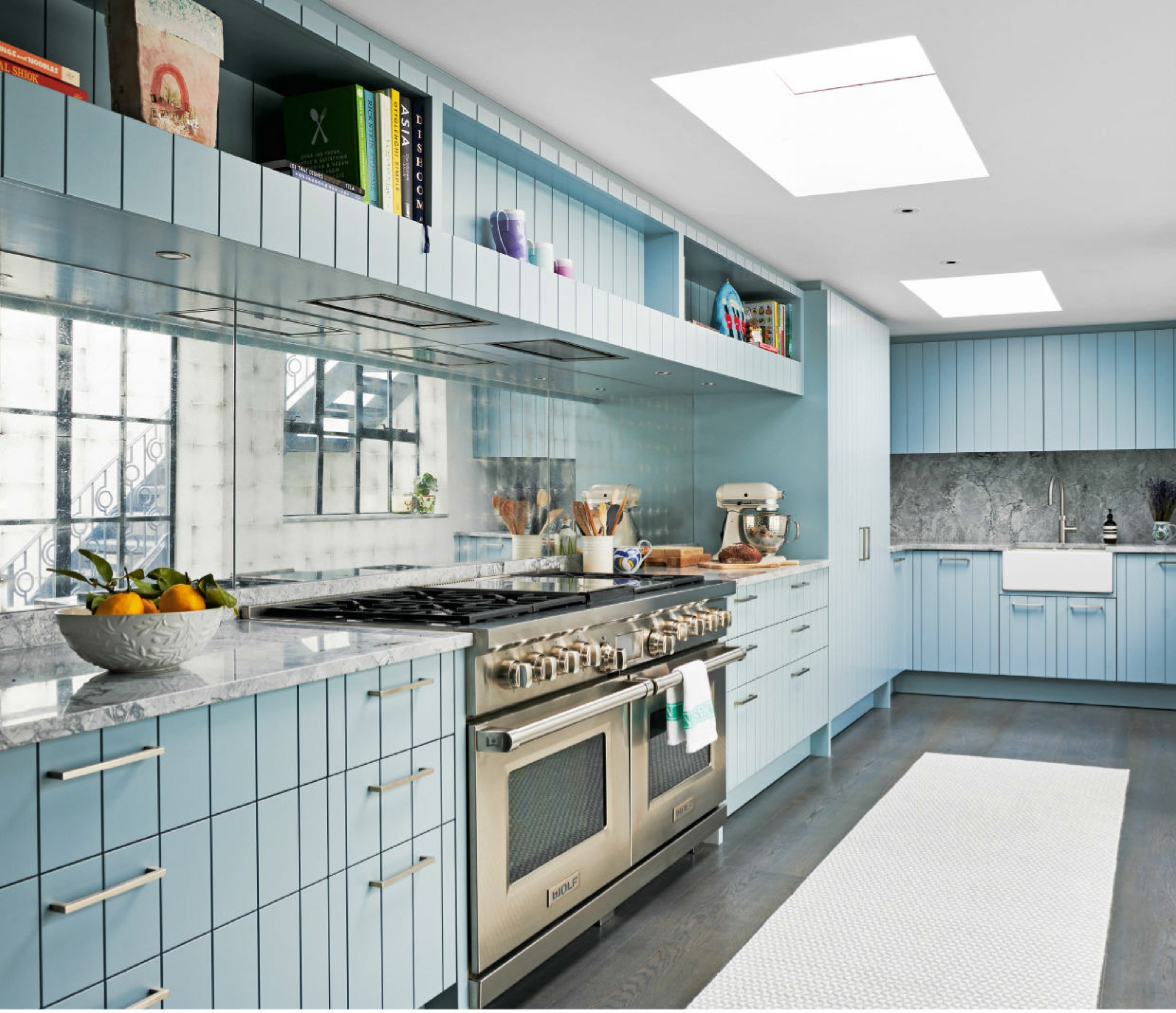
**LOCATION**
London

**SNUG**
**The energising effect of the artwork is grounded with a base of soft neutrals to create calm.** Bespoke sofa, armchairs and burr walnut coffee table, all Thorp Design. Wooden Totem wall light, Allied Maker. Artworks by Leigh Davis

# STRIKING A BALANCE

***Designer Philippa Thorp has managed to satisfy a complex brief for a calm and neutral LA vibe that also incorporates colourful pop art***

**FEATURE** KAREN WILSON | **PHOTOGRAPHY** RALUCA MARGESCU



**WHY DID YOUR CLIENT BUY THIS HOUSE?** The owner, a young professional and first-time buyer, used a property search agent to help find the right home in 2021. Her brief was clear: a stylish, well-connected area with a vibrant social scene, excellent restaurants and the sort of atmosphere that felt young yet established. Notting Hill delivered all of the above.

**HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?** We'd met the client's mother during a project in Thailand, while working on a neighbouring property. A few years later she asked us to take on her daughter's new London home.

**CAN YOU OUTLINE THE OWNER'S BRIEF?** Contemporary, tactile and sociable. The owner wanted her home to feel warm and inviting – a space where friends could gather together, yet never at the expense of comfort or practicality.

**WHAT WERE HER PRIORITIES?** Comfort, light, and flow. She was particularly drawn to soft, tactile fabrics – nothing too precious, but everything chosen with care. Storage was a must, as was a custom-designed wine cellar, influenced by her father's interest.

**WHAT WORK HAS BEEN DONE?** We introduced metal-framed glazing to pull light into the centre of the home and reimagined the entrance into a more generous sitting area. Adding a wall reoriented the space, as it draws attention to the fireplace. One of the most transformative elements was converting a previously neglected rear alley into a functional area that now connects seamlessly to the kitchen. The main bedroom, bathroom and kitchen have been completely redesigned, while the outdoor light well and terrace were renovated too.

**WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE SCHEME?** It was the homeowner herself. We wanted

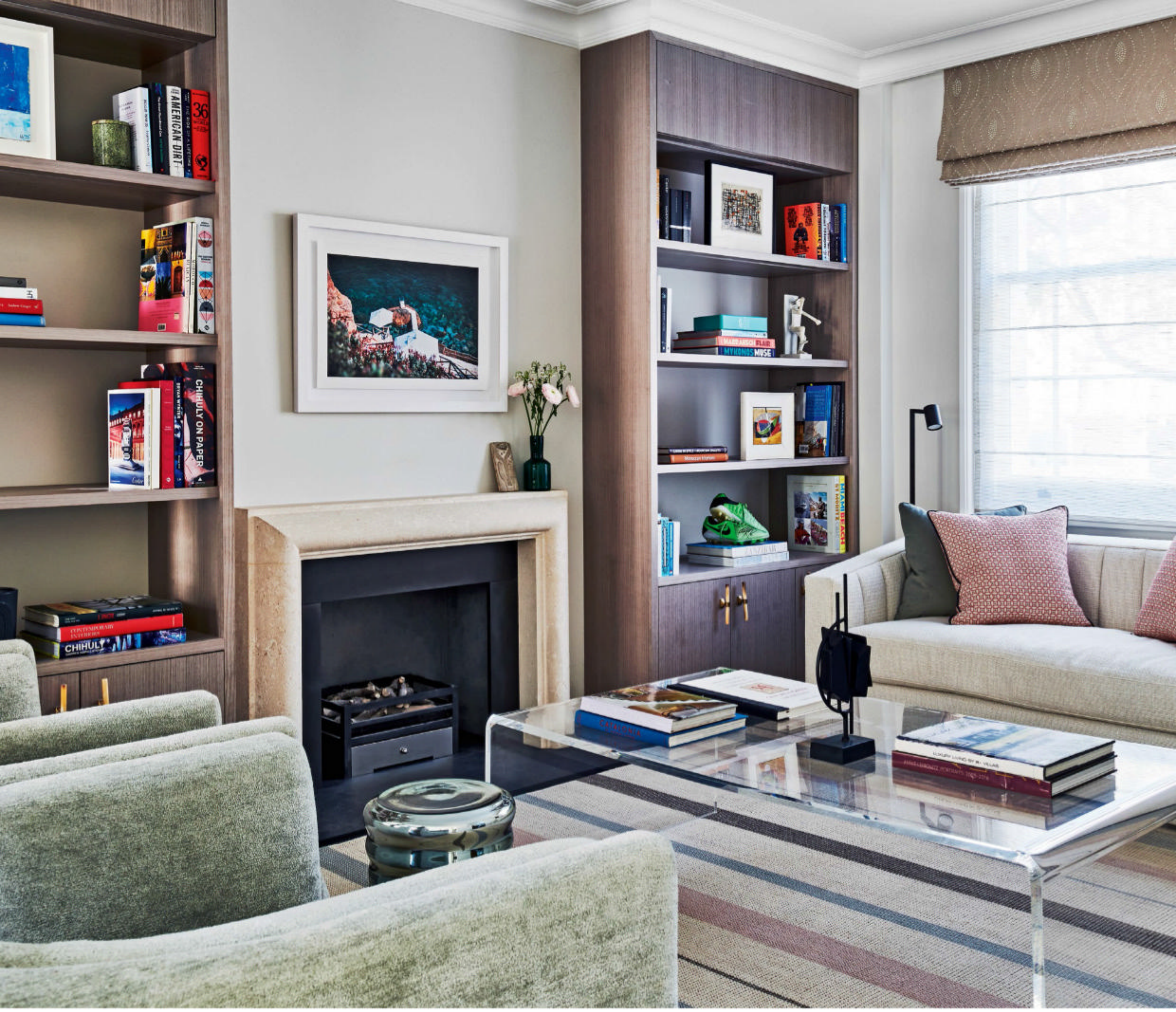
**'THE CEILING-HEIGHT SHELVING UNIT IN THE KITCHEN ECHOES THE BASE UNITS AND ALLOWED FOR A BUILT-IN EXTRACTOR OVER THE RANGE COOKER'**

**KITCHEN**
**An antiqued glass splashback makes this room appear wider while a textural grooved surface and open shelving add design interest and help to break up the runs of cabinetry.** Kitchen painted in Little Greene Bone China Blue, Mowlem and Co. Handles, Joseph Giles. Range cooker, Sub Zero and Wolf. Tanzania rug in Lagoon, Sinclair Till

**OFFICE**
**Seamless storage, incorporating a built-in floating desk, makes the most of the compact space.** Small Vespa lamp in Moth, Porta Romana. The plate is a unique Picasso plate. Kenneth Armitage resin sculpture, Thorp Design

**LANDING**
**Black-framed glazing on the first floor landing brings an abundance of light into both the office and snug.** Try Glass At Work for similar industrial-style aluminium doors. Hashira pendant cluster light, Audo Copenhagen

**DINING AREA**
**'A banquet-style dining table maximises the space between the kitchen and the wine cellar and subtly sets the scene for entertaining. It's intimate but generous,' Philippa says.** Artwork by Andrzej Urbanski. Alabaster cluster pendant, Tigermoth Lighting. Cielo large wall lights, CTO Lighting. Exe dining table, Tom Faulkner. Trafalgar chairs, Dining Chair Co



to design something that reflected her stage in life – joyful, modern and feminine, without being overly stylised. The metal-framed glazing brought a youthful energy to the space and kept the tone contemporary. Had we used traditional joinery, the result would have felt heavier.

**HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE COLOUR PALETTE?** Our client wanted her home to feel calm, neutral and a little LA in mood – however, she also owned a bold collection of pop art. We used the artwork as our starting point, plotting the placement of each piece and building the schemes around them. The colours in the pieces – mainly strong blues and oranges – informed our choices.

**WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?** Planning. We initially proposed extending the kitchen into the garden, but the house is in a conservation area and the idea was met with resistance from the local authority. We adapted quickly, reworked the layout to optimise what we had, and avoided unnecessary delays and costs.

**WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL SCHEME?** It hinges on balance, structure and variety. Balance is essential in the colour palette so tones are evenly weighted and work harmoniously together. Structure is about hierarchy. Hero fabrics – whether by texture, pattern or value – should be reserved for key features such as a sofa or curtains to anchor the room. Variety adds depth. A thoughtful mix of textures – silk, linen, bouclé, cotton – creates interest and tactility. A strong scheme should also reflect the client's personality. That might mean creating areas of calm with neutrals, offset by pockets of colour that add life and vibrancy. ㉕

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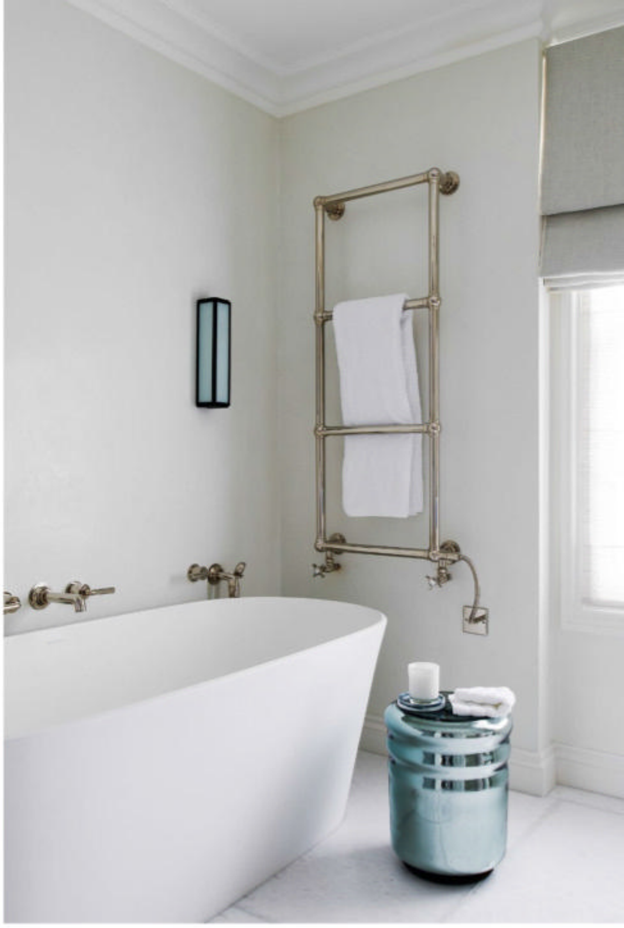
**'THE SEE-THROUGH NATURE OF THE COFFEE TABLE IN THE SITTING ROOM IS IDEAL AS IT CREATES A SENSE OF SPACE AND ALSO ADDS A MODERN TOUCH'**



**SITTING ROOM**
**'The new centrally located, beautifully proportioned fireplace establishes a sense of symmetry and visual balance with the bookcases on both sides,' says Philippa.** Bespoke armchair upholstered in Bagheera Silver Grey, Zinc Textile. Burano coffee table, Kave Home, is similar. Pale horn handles (on joinery), Ochre

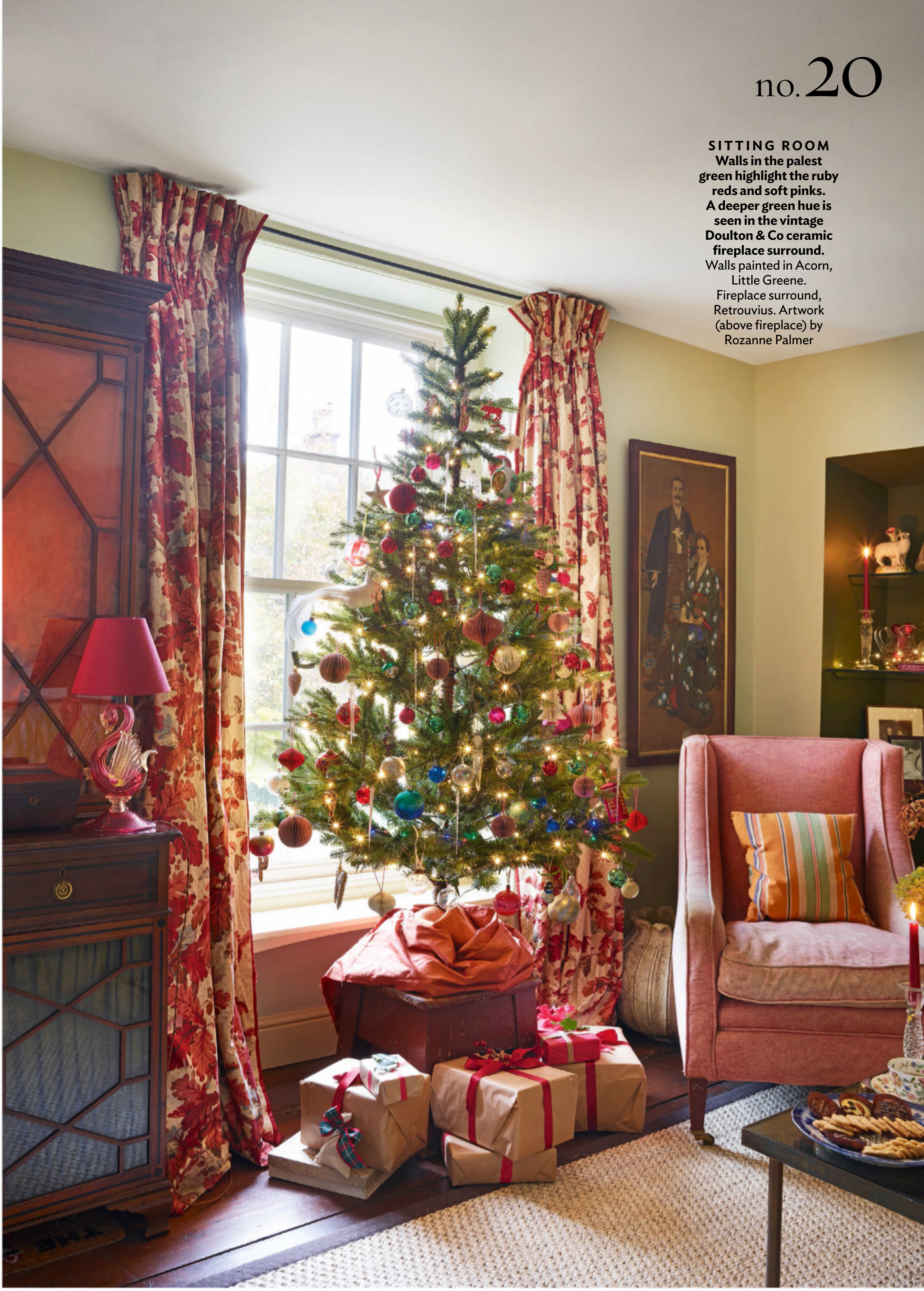
**BATHROOM**
**A simple neutral scheme allows the quality materials, such as the onyx basin and bronze fittings, to be the hero pieces.** Custom onyx basin, Thorp Design. Roman blind in Orsino fabric, Justin Van Breda. Olivia matt brass mirror cabinet, Bathroom Mountain, would work here. Mashiko wall light in Bronze, Astro. Wave stool in Blue, Invisible Collection. Vermont freestanding stone bath, Nôsa, has a similar look. Try Harley brushed bronze traditional wall mounted towel rail, NWT Direct

**MAIN BEDROOM**
**'We designed a four-poster bed as the centrepiece of this space and ensured there was ample storage,' says Philippa. 'Now it feels personal, restful and refined.'** Bespoke bed; lacquered bedside table with bleached oak drawer fronts; bench in Wanderer in Ecru, Christopher Farr Cloth, all Thorp Design. Three Drop pendant lights, Curiousa

# A winter's TALE

***A fortuitous meeting in an antiques shop on a winter day led to the perfect property for house-hunter and interior designer Martin Wharton***

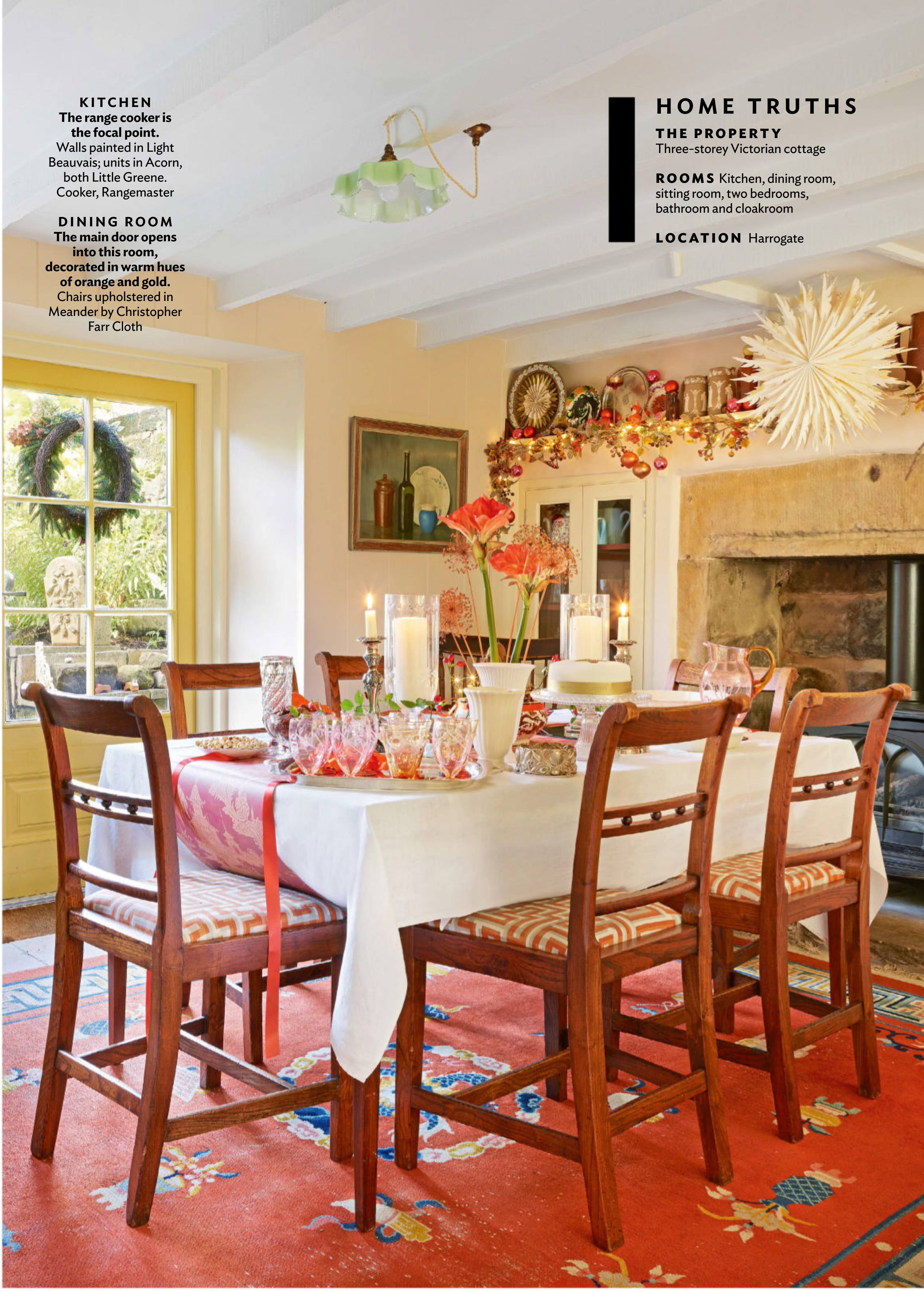
**WORDS** JO LEEVERS | **PHOTOGRAPHY** RACHAEL SMITH | **STYLING** MARTIN WHARTON



## no.20

**SITTING ROOM**
**Walls in the palest green highlight the ruby reds and soft pinks. A deeper green hue is seen in the vintage Doulton & Co ceramic fireplace surround.** Walls painted in Acorn, Little Greene. Fireplace surround, Retrouvius. Artwork (above fireplace) by Rozanne Palmer

‘WHEN WE VIEWED THE HOUSE ON NEW YEAR’S DAY, THE WINDOWS WERE LIT UP AND A FIRE WAS BLAZING, GIVING US A WONDERFUL WELCOME’



**KITCHEN**
**The range cooker is the focal point.** Walls painted in Light Beauvais; units in Acorn, both Little Greene. Cooker, Rangemaster

**DINING ROOM**
**The main door opens into this room, decorated in warm hues of orange and gold.** Chairs upholstered in Meander by Christopher Farr Cloth

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**
Three-storey Victorian cottage

**ROOMS** Kitchen, dining room, sitting room, two bedrooms, bathroom and cloakroom

**LOCATION** Harrogate

**BATHROOM**
**The bath is set inside a marble surround for a luxe touch.**
Bath, Kaldewei. Taps, Lusso

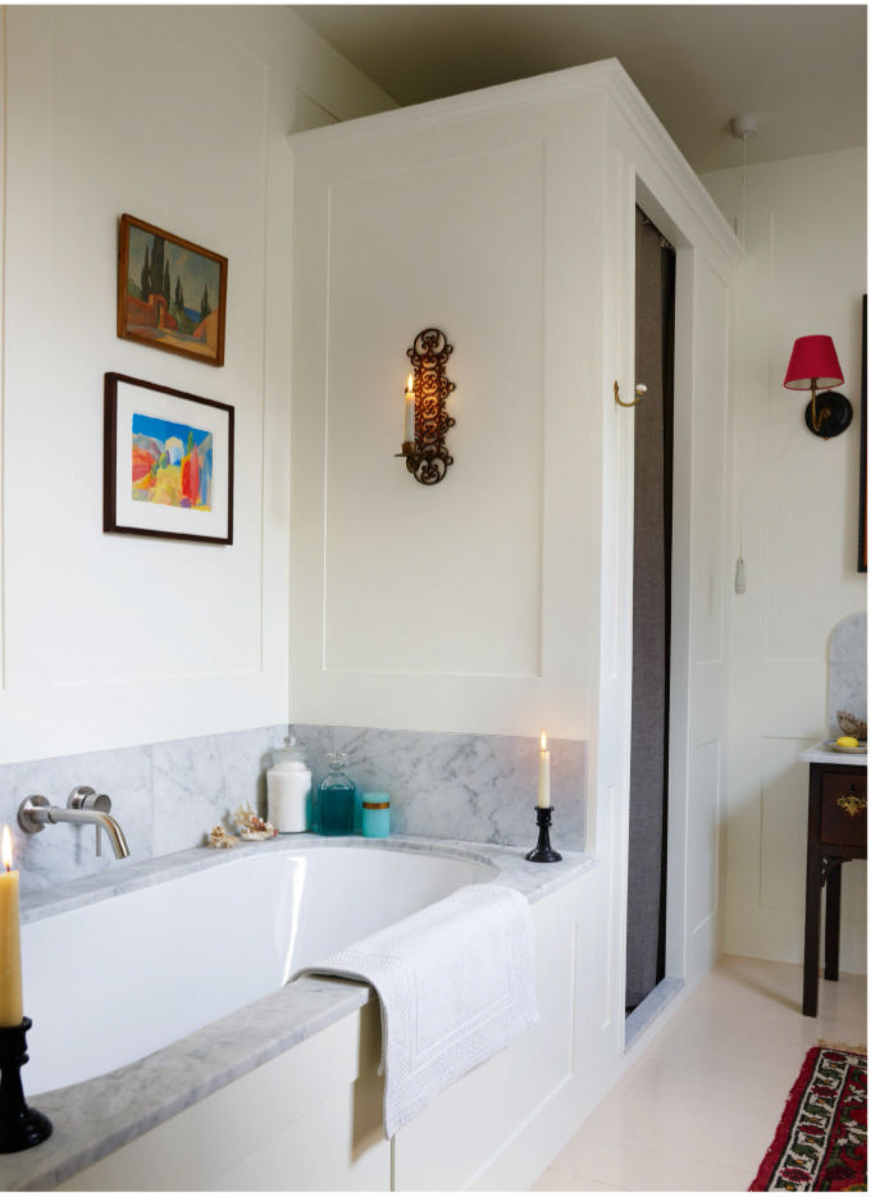
**STAIRCASE**
**This is decorated with festive trimmings and vintage Norwegian skiing socks.**
Stairs painted in Light Gold, Little Greene. Walls painted in Deep Reddish Brown, Farrow & Ball

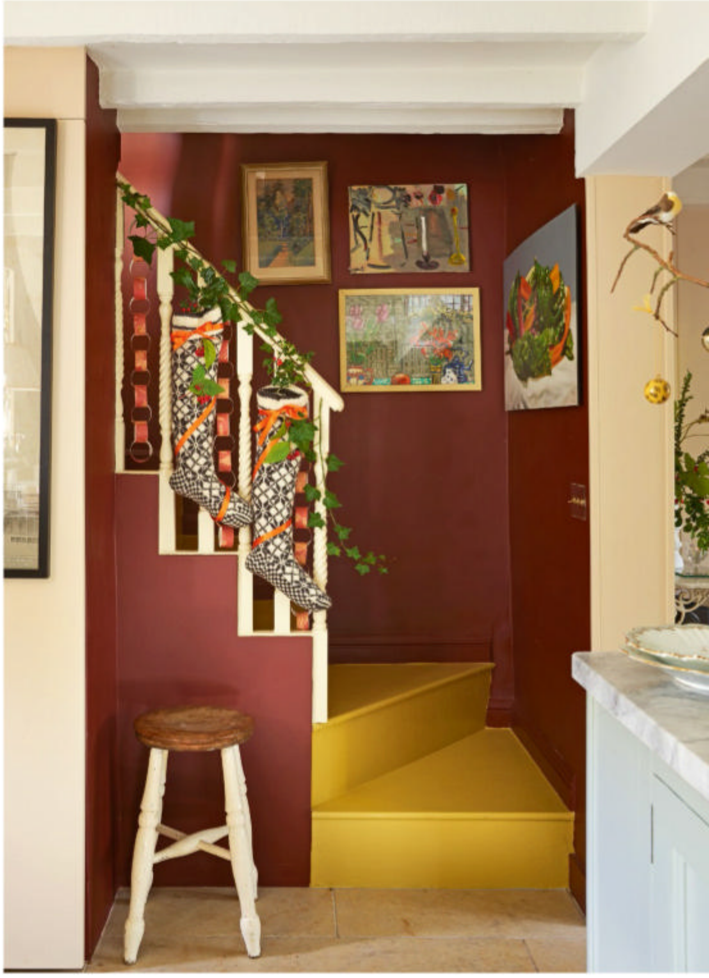
Three Christmases ago, Martin Wharton had come to Harrogate in North Yorkshire to view a completely different house, but at the last minute the estate agent called to cancel their appointment. Martin consoled himself with a browse in a nearby antiques shop where he got chatting to the owner, before they were joined by a woman who was a regular customer. 'I mentioned that I was house-hunting and the lady remarked that she had a cottage that she'd been renting out for a few years, but the tenant was about to leave and she was thinking of selling up.' When she asked if Martin would like to see it, he jumped at the chance.

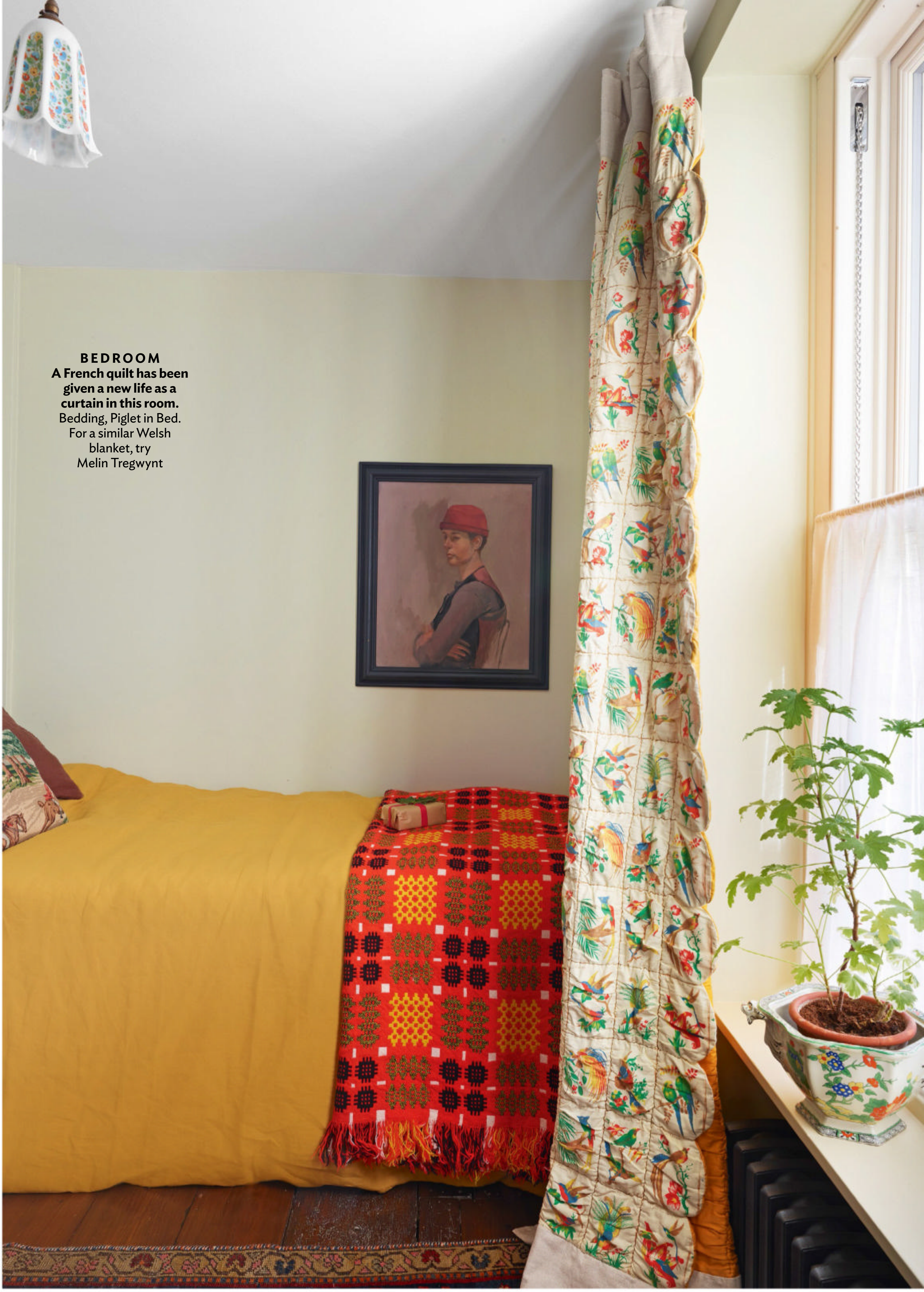
On his first visit to what would become his new home, Martin could peep through the window, but that glimpse was enough to tell him that he would love the house. 'When a friend and I returned to view the house properly on New Year's Day, the windows were lit up and a fire was blazing, giving us a wonderful welcome,' he remembers.

Martin, founder of interior design practice Settle, moved to North Yorkshire from Kent and although the rooms in this house are smaller, he was delighted to find that almost all of his existing furniture fitted in exceptionally well. Even two large rugs made bespoke for living spaces in his previous home are, he says, 'a perfect fit'.

Martin is renowned for combining furniture styles from different eras and







**BEDROOM**
**A French quilt has been given a new life as a curtain in this room.** Bedding, Piglet in Bed. For a similar Welsh blanket, try Melin Tregwynt

**MAIN BEDROOM**
**A mirrored art deco headboard adds glamour that feels fitting for the season.** Walls painted in Hay; woodwork in Deep Reddish Brown, both Farrow & Ball. Bedding, Secret Linen Store. Wall light, Vaughan. Painting (above fireplace) by Arthur Neal. For a similar Welsh blanket, try Melin Tregwynt

bringing subtly modern touches to period homes. In this cottage, for example, he has added mirror glass to the window reveals on the ground floor so they bring in extra light, reflect the garden foliage and enhance a display of delicate glassware.

He also has a talent for decorating with rich colours and a warm yellow partnered with a deep reddish-brown appears in several of the spaces. This combination is seen particularly effectively on the staircase, which is also beautifully decorated for the season. 'I don't usually gravitate towards dark colours, but I absolutely love the effect here,' he says.

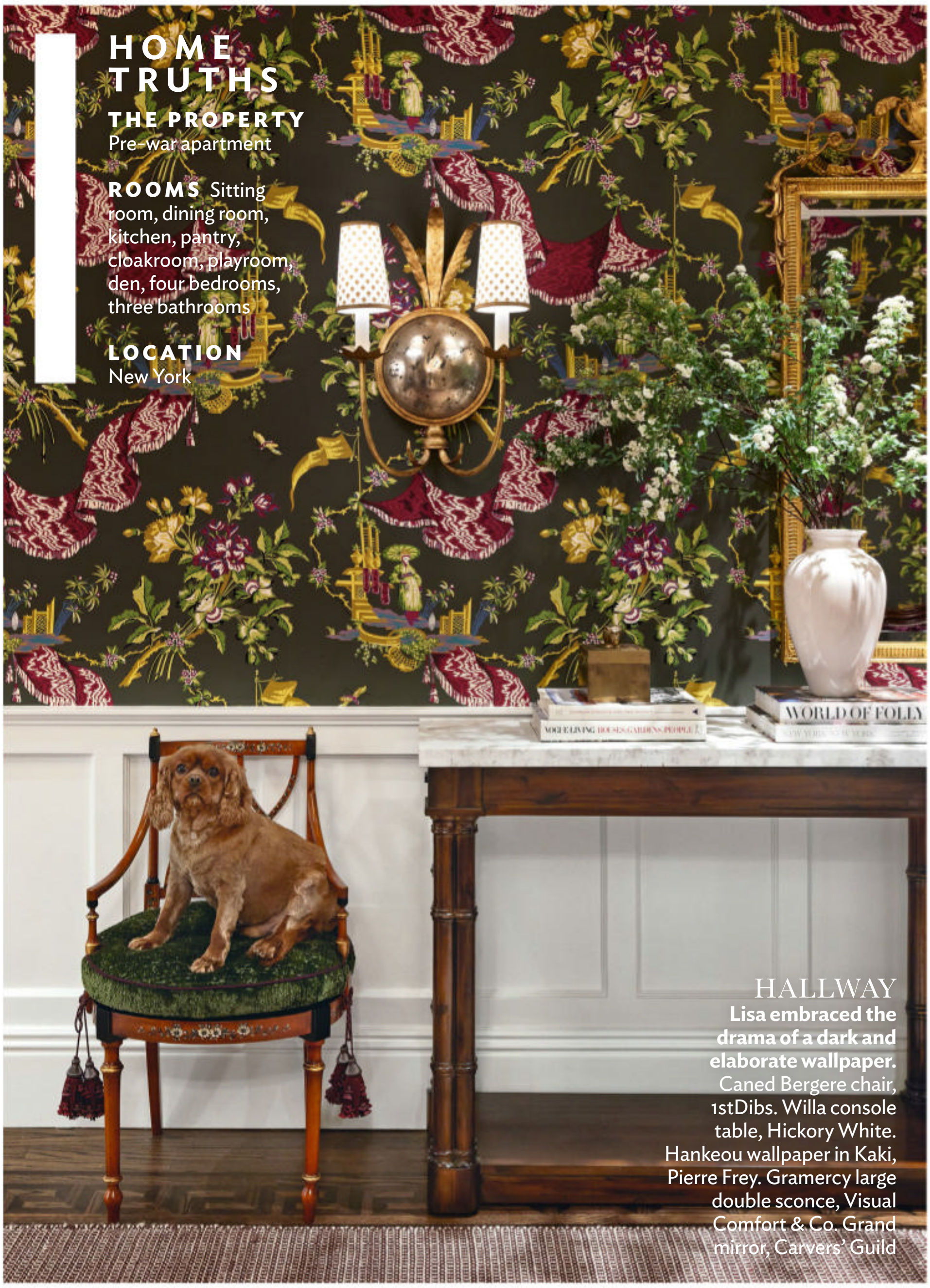
Martin has always been a collector of antiques and art but, he explains, 'I've never had a "one size fits all" approach to design. If there's one thing that unites my various projects, it is that I like to create the feeling of a house having stories to tell.'

A key style story that runs through the rooms of Martin's home is chinoiserie and the burnt oranges and browns found in antique silks, kimonos and furniture inlay inspired his seasonal table setting. 'It is a colour combination that feels comforting, but also has a slightly modern edge,' he says.

Martin feels very much at home here and, at this time of year, he likes to hold a festive gathering for friends, neighbours and nearby family who have all made him feel so welcome. 'After many moves, this really is my forever home. I'm very happy here,' he says. ㉕
*settlehomes.com*

no. 21

# *Fairytale of* NEW YORK



## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** Pre-war apartment

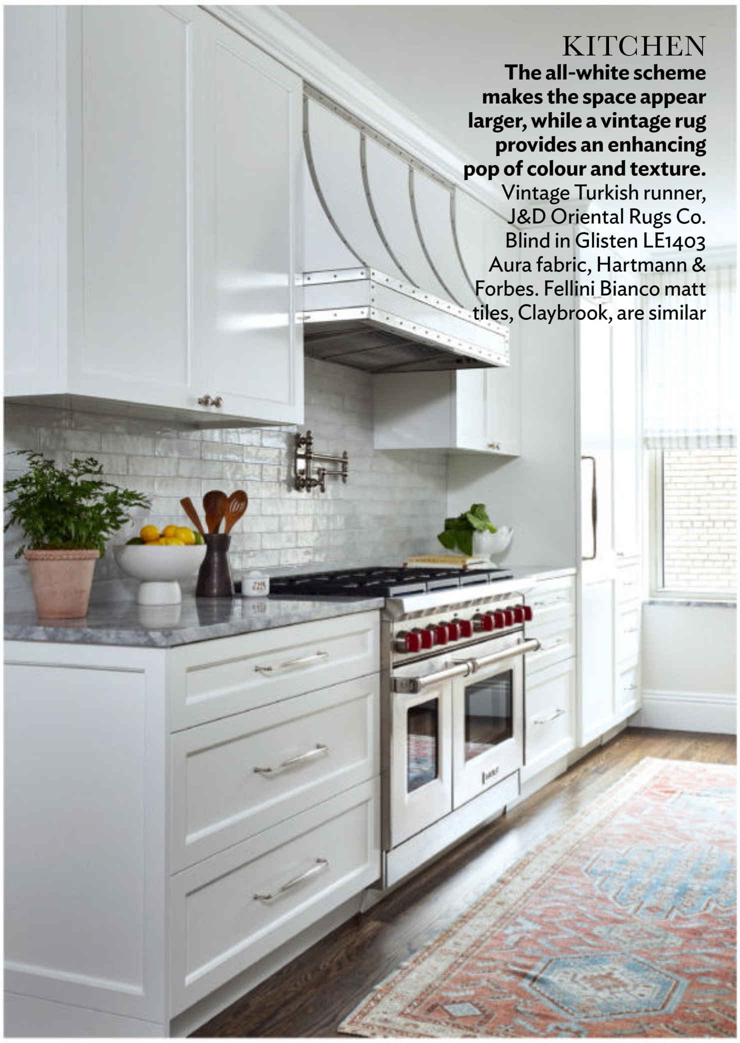
**ROOMS** Sitting room, dining room, kitchen, pantry, cloakroom, playroom, den, four bedrooms, three bathrooms

**LOCATION** New York

HALLWAY **Lisa embraced the drama of a dark and elaborate wallpaper.** Caned Bergere chair, 1stDibs. Willa console table, Hickory White. Hankeou wallpaper in Kaki, Pierre Frey. Gramercy large double sconce, Visual Comfort & Co. Grand mirror, Carvers' Guild

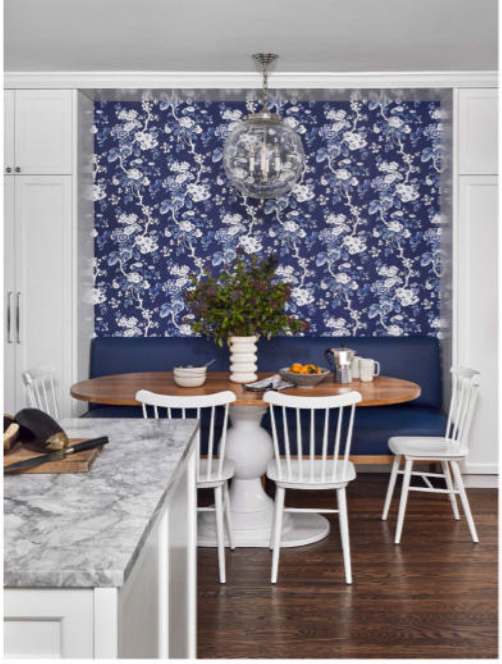
Designer Lisa Frantz reveals how she transformed this formerly dark Park Avenue pre-war apartment into a stunning and light-filled family home

**WORDS** JULIET BENNING | **STYLING** FRANCES BAILEY | **PHOTOGRAPHY** PETER MURDOCK



### KITCHEN

**The all-white scheme makes the space appear larger, while a vintage rug provides an enhancing pop of colour and texture.** Vintage Turkish runner, J&D Oriental Rugs Co. Blind in Glisten LE1403 Aura fabric, Hartmann & Forbes. Fellini Bianco matt tiles, Claybrook, are similar



### KITCHEN-DINER

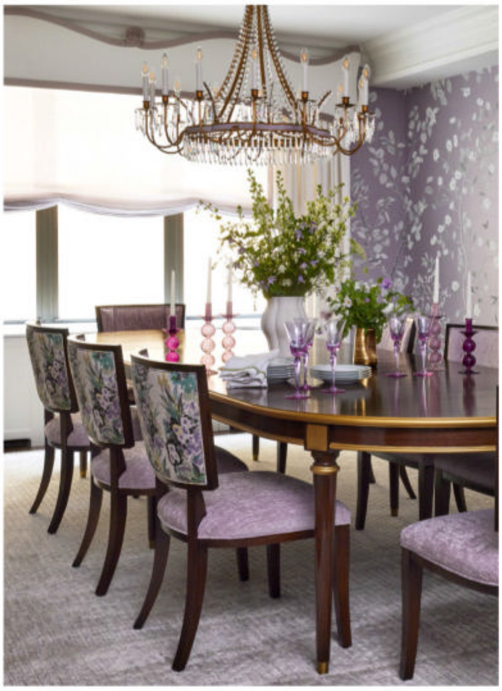
**The large pendant draws the eye upwards, while the botanical wallpaper makes a dramatic backdrop.** Sorenson 18 lantern, Remains Lighting. Ascot wallpaper in Indigo, Scalamandré. Talia dining chairs, Habitat, are similar

> ‘The sitting room walls are venetian plaster with silver mica powder mixed in to make them luminous – this helps to bounce the light around’

**HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?**
I’d worked with the client and many of her closest friends previously. I did the interiors of her first home about 15 years ago when she was pregnant with twins. She and her husband now have three children together and this is their ‘forever home’.

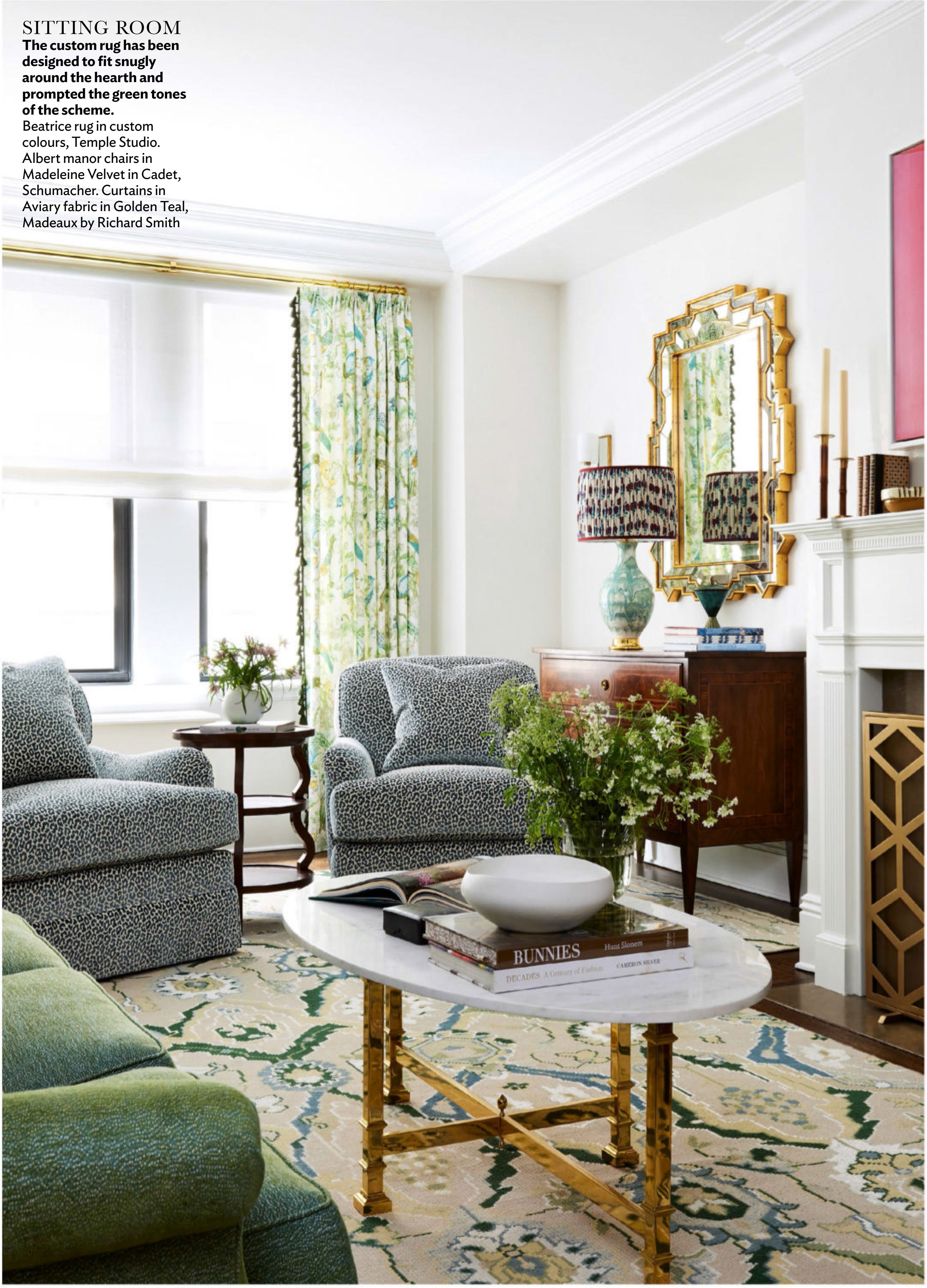
**TELL US ABOUT THE PROPERTY AND THE GOALS OF YOUR CLIENT.** It hadn’t been renovated in about 25 years and lacked colour and pattern. It belonged to a family with four children and during Covid they had gone to live at their second home so this one sat empty. It was very dark and dated with partitions and walls in strange places. The clients were concerned about the lack of light as the building is about half a block long and some of the windows look onto the courtyard. They wanted to open the apartment up and make it more family friendly.

**HOW DID YOU MAKE THE APARTMENT FEEL LIGHTER?**
If we couldn’t get light, we were able to fake it. We used lots of tricks, for example hanging mirrors, to bounce light around. We added recessed lighting in certain areas by dropping the ceilings. We also added decorative lighting that would become a focal point and wow-factor. We didn’t shy away from darker colours but contrasted these with plenty of sparkle.



### DINING ROOM

**The purple tones exude elegance.** Botanical wallcovering, Aux Abris. Tole chandelier, Iatesta Studio. Adele side chairs, Century Furniture; upholstered in Madame Farfalla in lavender, Tulu. Custom table, MTC Studio Design

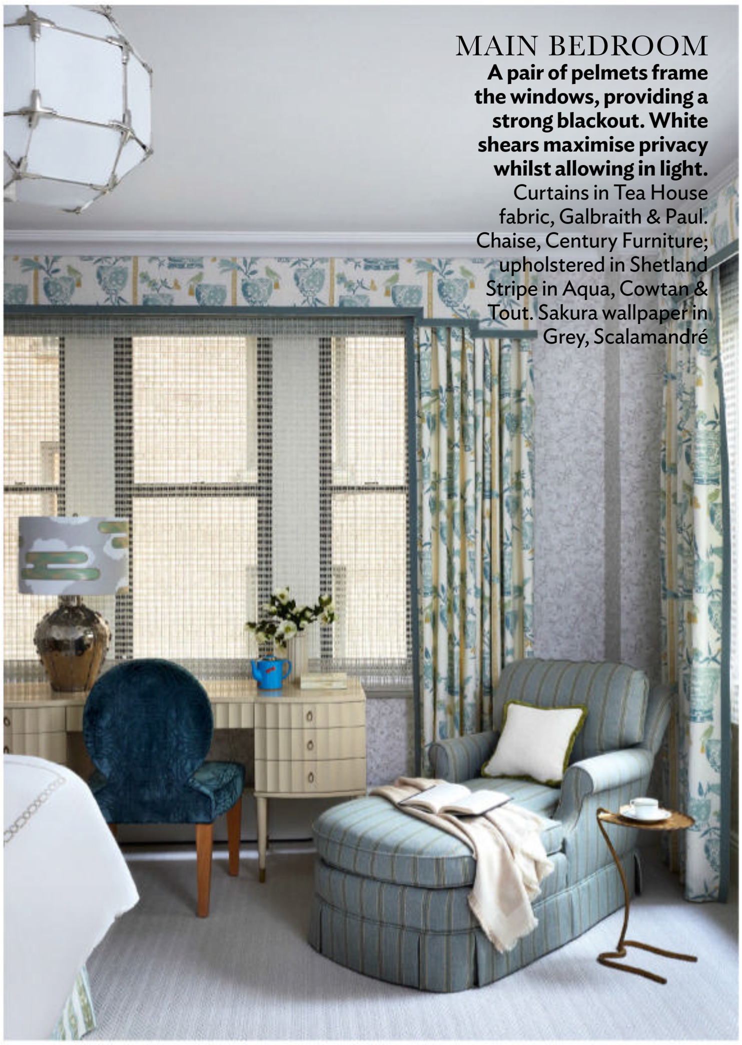


BUNNIES
Hunt Slonem
DECADES A Century of Fashion
CAMERON SILVER

SITTING ROOM

**The custom rug has been designed to fit snugly around the hearth and prompted the green tones of the scheme.**

Beatrice rug in custom colours, Temple Studio. Albert manor chairs in Madeleine Velvet in Cadet, Schumacher. Curtains in Aviary fabric in Golden Teal, Madeaux by Richard Smith



## MAIN BEDROOM

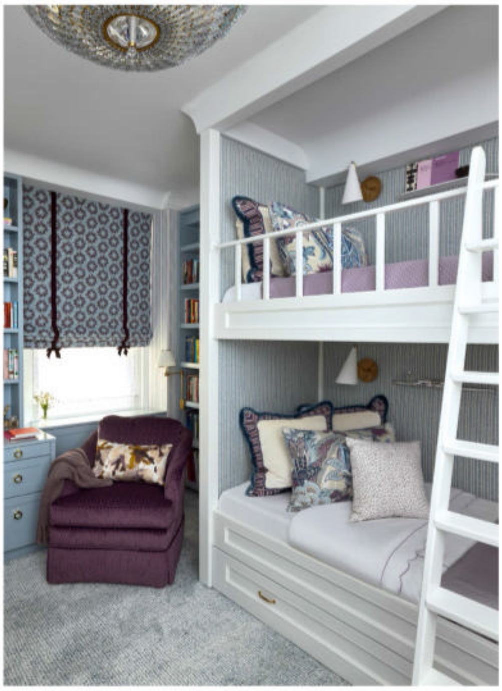
**A pair of pelmets frame the windows, providing a strong blackout. White shears maximise privacy whilst allowing in light.** Curtains in Tea House fabric, Galbraith & Paul. Chaise, Century Furniture; upholstered in Shetland Stripe in Aqua, Cowtan & Tout. Sakura wallpaper in Grey, Scalamandré

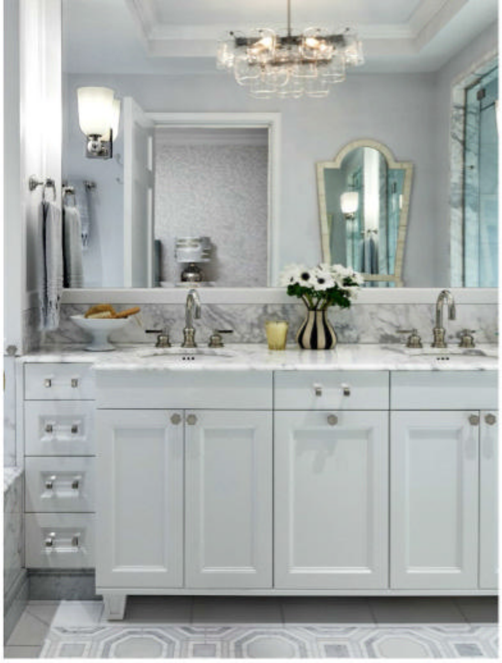
## BATHROOM

**Elegant floor tiles pair with the grain of the marble.** Monte Carlo mosaic floor tiles; Carrara marble field tiles, both Studium. Liston wall light, Vaughan. Antique ceiling light, source similar 1stDibs. Aero Gooseneck faucets, Waterworks

## CHILD'S BEDROOM

**Bunks with a trundle bed underneath make great use of space, while the walls inside are upholstered for comfort.** Walls upholstered in Delphine in Neela/Oyster, Vanderhurd. Blind in Lolly fabric in Fig, Leah O'Connell Design





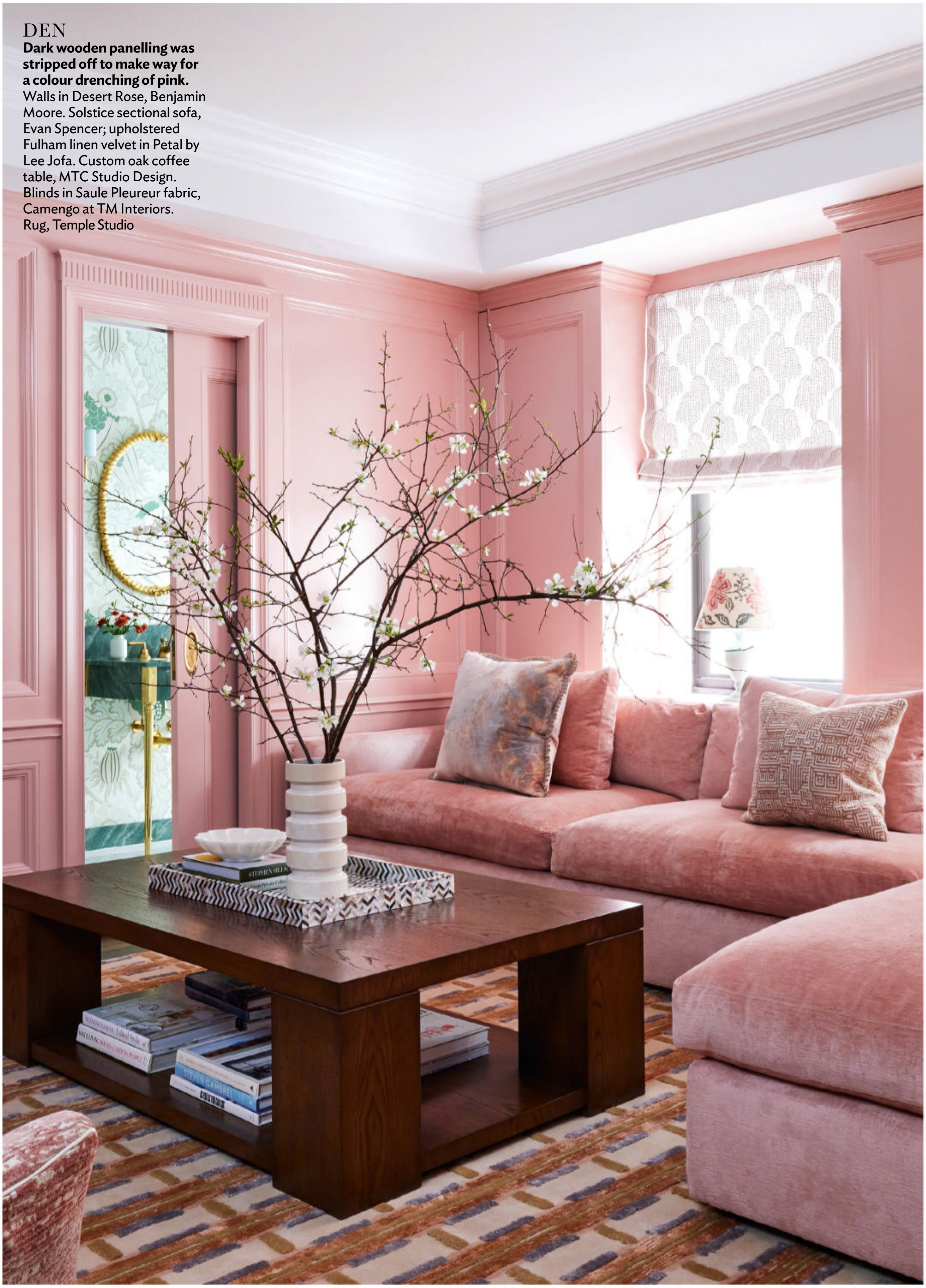
> 'The apartment has the feel of a brownstone and, being on the second floor, there are leafy treetop views'

**TELL US ABOUT THE CHANGES TO THE FLOOR PLAN.** Changes were mostly in the kitchen which we opened up into an L-shape. We turned a hallway that connects the kitchen and dining room into a butler's pantry. It has an extra dishwasher, sink, a wine fridge and space to store all the china. We also transformed a dreary laundry room into a little gym.

**CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE HOMEOWNER'S STYLE?**
She loves colour and said, 'Give me light, bright and happy.' She especially loves more feminine colours like lavenders, pinks and purples, and she's very open to pattern. It's an open-door apartment so flow was important. I didn't want people to come in and start referring to 'the pink or blue room', so I opted for base colours that would carry over without any jarring transitions. The client is also a highly practical person so fabrics have all been stain protected and all the upholstery is performance fabric.

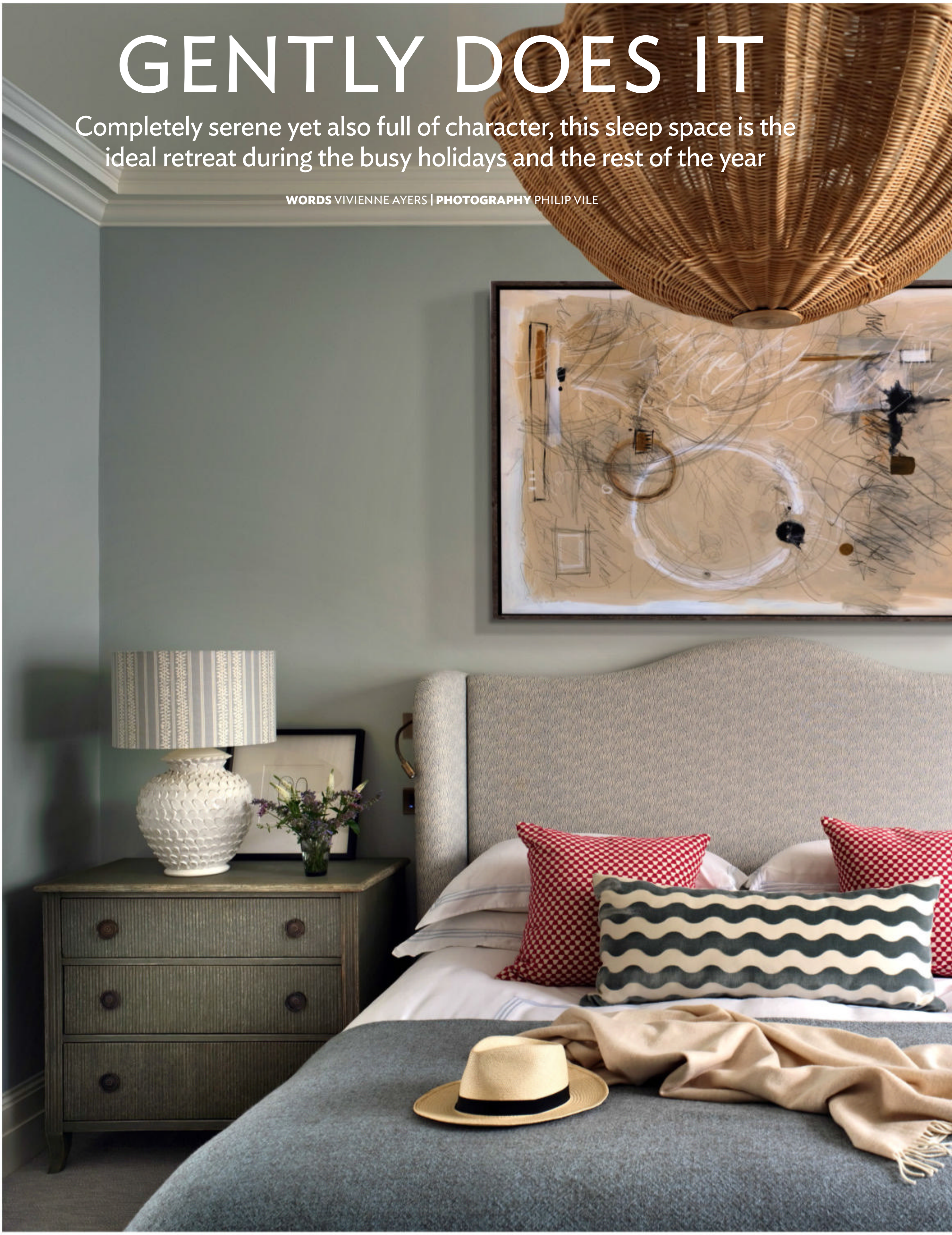
**WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR INSPIRATION?** I gravitate towards modern-traditional but often with offbeat colours. A lot of the companies I work with have been around for over 100 years but they're staying fresh and current. They'll keep some of their classic patterns but they'll refresh them with more modern colour combinations. I also tune in to UK, French and Spanish style which all have colour combinations you don't see in the US. ㉕

*lisafrantzinteriors.com*



DEN

**Dark wooden panelling was stripped off to make way for a colour drenching of pink.** Walls in Desert Rose, Benjamin Moore. Solstice sectional sofa, Evan Spencer; upholstered Fulham linen velvet in Petal by Lee Jofa. Custom oak coffee table, MTC Studio Design. Blinds in Saule Pleureur fabric, Camengo at TM Interiors. Rug, Temple Studio

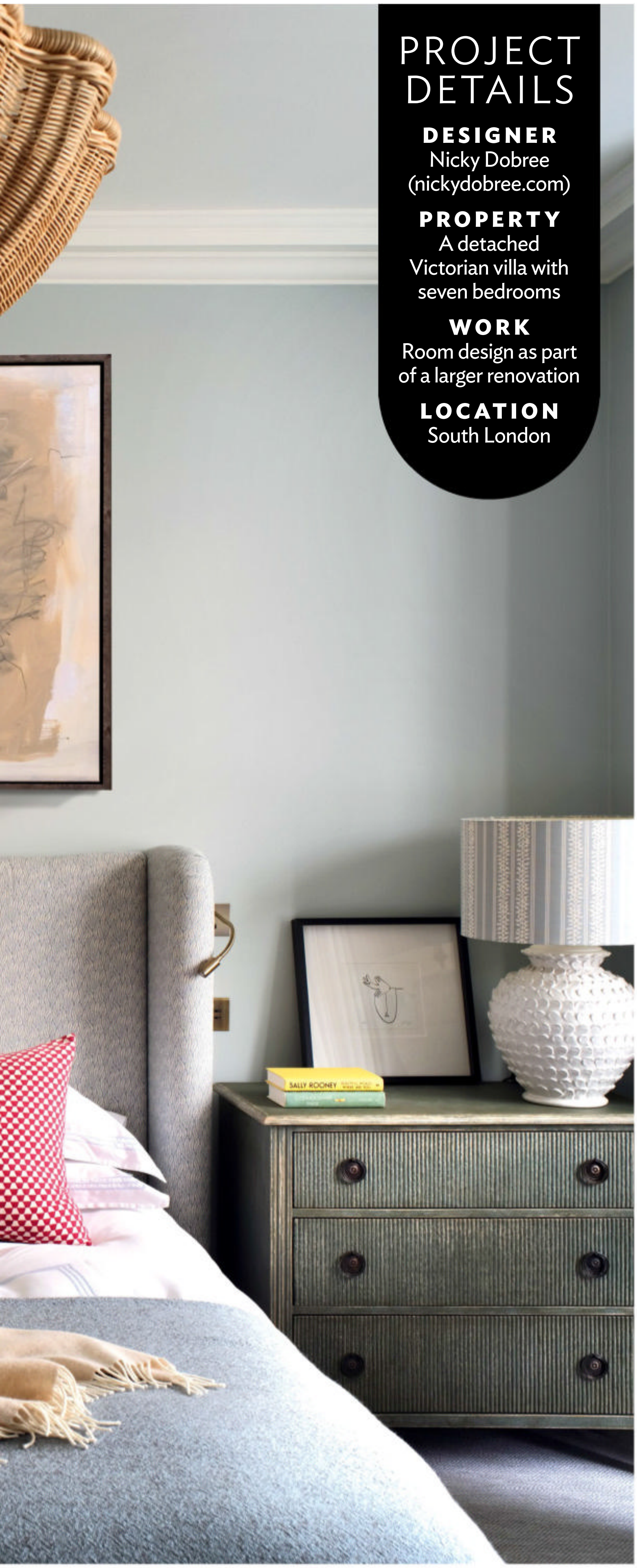


# GENTLY DOES IT

Completely serene yet also full of character, this sleep space is the ideal retreat during the busy holidays and the rest of the year

**WORDS** VIVIENNE AYERS | **PHOTOGRAPHY** PHILIP VILE

# no.22



## PROJECT DETAILS

**DESIGNER**
Nicky Dobree
(nickydobree.com)

**PROPERTY**
A detached
Victorian villa with
seven bedrooms

**WORK**
Room design as part
of a larger renovation

**LOCATION**
South London

Interior designer Nicky Dobree was enlisted to work on this full property renovation, transforming a Victorian villa into the perfect home for a family with four children. The main bedroom was turned into a calming sanctuary, complete with a walk-in dressing room and en suite. 'It's timeless and elegant,' says Nicky.

### 1 SERENE SANCTUARY

The main suite leads off the landing, and the entrance to the bedroom is through double doors off the dressing room, giving a sense of privacy and luxury. The room is layered around the calming palette of pale blue, one of the client's favourite colours. 'We worked within the tonal palette, adding richness through the different textures,' says Nicky. Texture is woven into the scheme through the different fabrics and materials used. 'We hung curtains in a tightly woven linen, with a pair of armchairs upholstered in velvet. There is minimal pattern as the intention was for a pared-back, calm palette, layered with gently contrasting tones.'

### 2 COCOONING EFFECT

The focal point of the scheme is the beautifully shaped bed. 'The bed was made bespoke as a statement in the centre of the room,' says Nicky. 'The wings on the headboard give added support and cocooning comfort. The bed linen is also bespoke from Italy with pale blue cord to tie in with the scheme.' Layering on the bed enhances the comfort factor.

### 3 LIGHT FANTASTIC

The eye is deliberately drawn to the high ceiling with a statement pendant. 'I chose the rattan pendant for its sculptural form and its texture,' says Nicky. 'It allows light to filter through and onto the ceiling, creating a lovely soft light.'

### 4 PERIOD FEEL

Nods to the age of the property ensure a scheme that feels considered and created over time. New moulding complements the room's proportions, while the bedside chests were chosen because they are inspired by 18th-century Gustavian designs.

### COLOUR & COMFORT

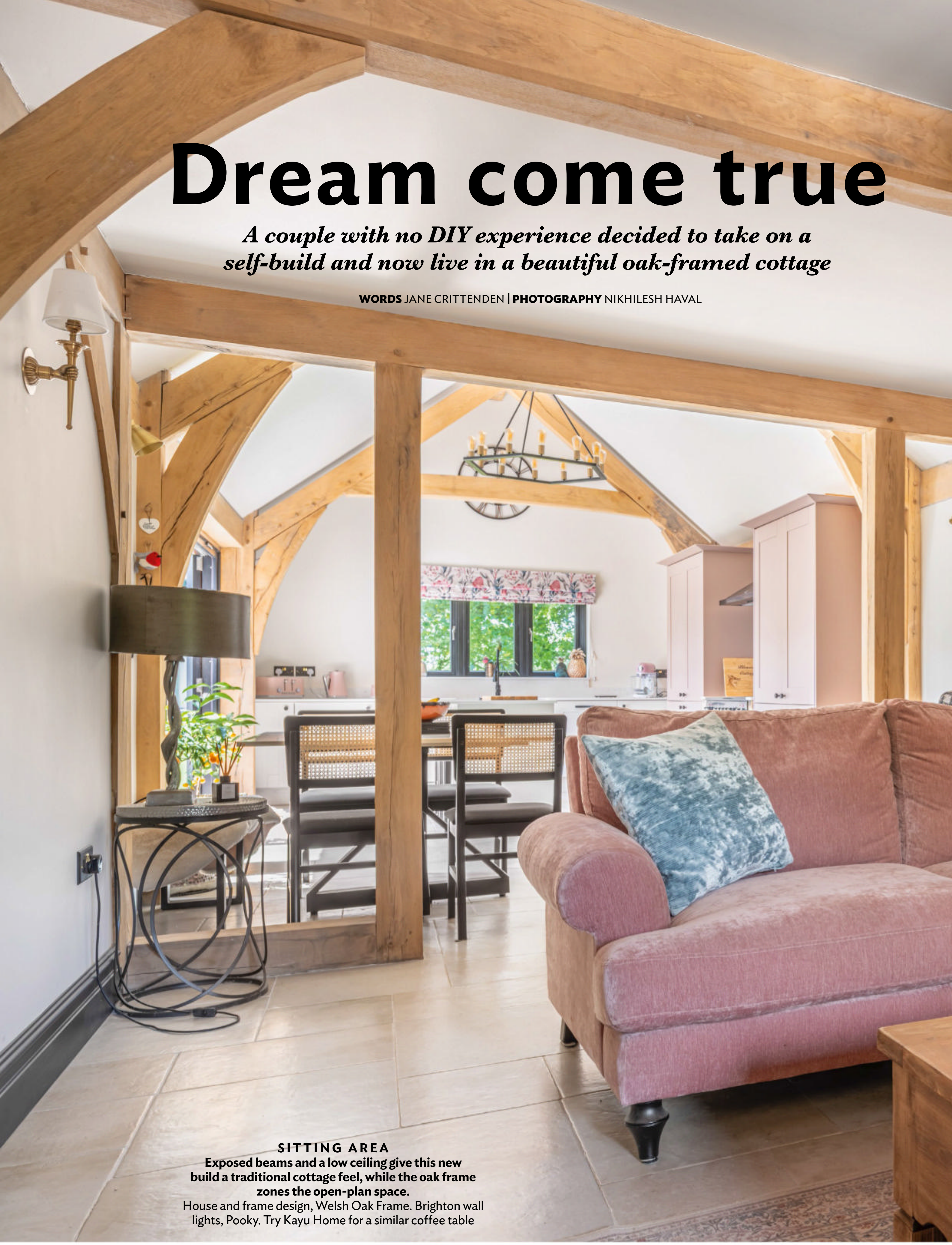
**To bring in additional interest, Nicky chose to introduce pops of colour with patterned cushions in both a square and rectangular shape that draw the eye. These can easily be changed to vary the look.**

Bespoke **bed**, upholstered in fabric by Bennison Fabrics. Pink **cushions in** fabric by Soane Britain; rectangular **cushion in** fabric by Schumacher. **Pendant**, Soane Britain

# Dream come true

*A couple with no DIY experience decided to take on a self-build and now live in a beautiful oak-framed cottage*

**WORDS** JANE CRITTENDEN | **PHOTOGRAPHY** NIKHILESH HAVAL



SITTING AREA
**Exposed beams and a low ceiling give this new build a traditional cottage feel, while the oak frame zones the open-plan space.**
House and frame design, Welsh Oak Frame. Brighton wall lights, Pooky. Try Kayu Home for a similar coffee table

no. 23

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** Oak frame new build

**ROOMS** Open-plan living area, kitchen, four bedrooms, three bathrooms

**LOCATION** Essex

Katy and Alan Pateman found themselves unexpectedly taking on a self-build after a sudden move from their previous home due to problems with neighbours. After temporarily staying with friends in a pretty village on the Blackwater Estuary, they found a plot. But it was in a conservation area with a history of planning refusals and lapsed planning for a specific design. 'Approval had been given for a two-bedroom timber frame cottage, designed to look old with white weatherboarding,' Katy explains. 'Alan and I liked the look of it but were very unsure if a self-build project was for us – we are a couple who didn't even do DIY!'

While debating the idea, the couple did some research. Katy got a quote for a softwood structural frame but thought the cottage would look bland. Friends suggested building in oak. 'One of them lived in a beautiful oak house built by Welsh Oak Frame and we really loved it,' says Katy. 'At this stage, we hadn't bought the land but were pleasantly surprised by the company's quote and realised we could afford to do this. 'The final decision came when I went back to visit the site and all the trees were in blossom. I suddenly had this wonderful vision of a property called Blossom Cottage with touches of pink in every room.'

Katy and Alan, an accountant, came to an arrangement with the landowners, allowing them first refusal to buy the plot if they got planning permission. Welsh Oak Frame's designer came to site and they discussed how the structural oak frame might look.

While they waited, the couple began to consider the interior of their potential new home. 'For planning, the outside had to look the

> 'Our modest cottage maximises space and shows oak framing is affordable and not just for millionaires'

**HALLWAY**
**Ceramic floor tiles that look like stone run throughout the downstairs where underfloor heating is powered by an air source heat pump.**
Try Loire Beige tiles, Porcelain Superstore. *The Green, Richmond* artwork by Susie West

**KITCHEN**
**'For the design, I was inspired by a pink pantry cupboard I'd seen in a kitchen advertisement,' says Katy.**
Turco 12-light wagon wheel chandelier is similar, Wayfair. Cabinetry, JN Interiors

**SITTING AREA**
**Pink sofas tie in with the pink pantry cupboard in the kitchen, helping to keep the open-plan space cohesive.**
Sydney sofa in Pink, DFS. Find a similar scallop-edge tray on eBay

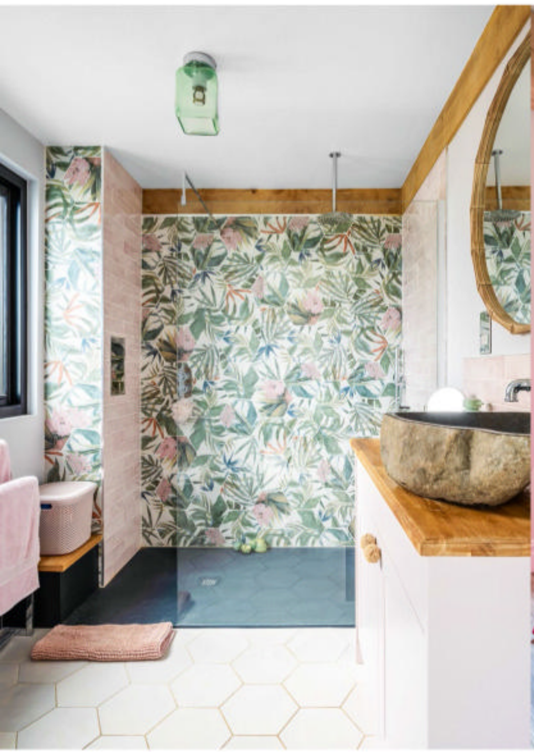
same but inside we could do what we liked,' says Katy. 'My feeling was less oak would make our home feel more open and although I wanted beams, I didn't want rooms to feel overwhelmed.'

Changes were made to create more bedrooms to accommodate the couple's son, Frank, and their adult children and partners who would stay. One of the two upstairs bedrooms was split into two, while space from the second one created an en-suite bedroom. The ground floor dining room became the couple's en-suite bedroom. Planning approval finally came through and Alan hired a builder client of his, Greg Marston from Marston Contracts, to take on the build.

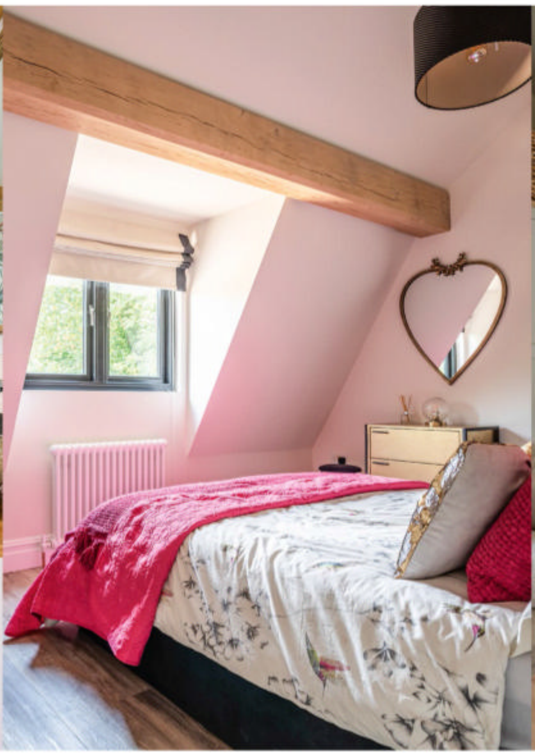
When it came to the interiors, Katy, who used to run a cupcake business, already knew pinks with a warm tone would be central to the colour scheme to complement the oak. 'The inspiration for the palette actually came from a cushion I bought in TK Maxx, which had the exact shade of pink, cream and blue I loved,' she explains. 'It became a reference point for everything from the colour palette of the kitchen to the sofas. I took it everywhere – my builders thought I was bonkers!'

Katy had sold all the furniture from their previous townhouse because it didn't suit the cottage-style property. She became creative, buying pieces on Facebook Marketplace and borrowing the builders' tools to refresh and upcycle her purchases. 'I had this idea that I wanted the cottage to be perfect for the festive season – a sense of family, sharing and entertaining – so I was delighted when we moved in the week before Christmas,' she says. 'We never thought we'd be self-builders yet now we're living in the house of our dreams.'

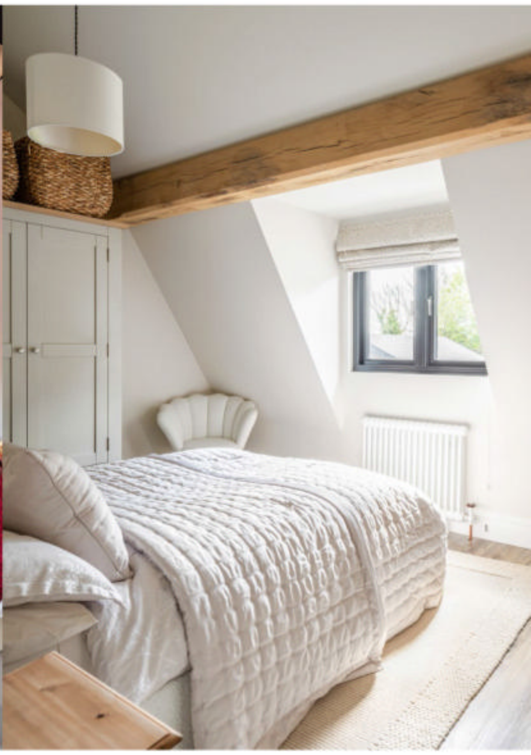
'We're accidental self-builders and the pre-approved design of our chocolate-box cottage is just what we would have chosen'



**MAIN EN SUITE**
**'I fell in love with the tiles in a high-end shop and sourced them locally for a fraction of the price,' says Katy.** Botanical Hexagon tiles, Tiles DIY. Try British Ceramic's Hexagon Cream tile, Tiles Direct. Basin, The Stone Sink Company



**MAIN BEDROOM**
**Pink and green tones reflect the garden and the colours in the tiles in the adjoining bathroom.** For a similar wall paint colour, try Granny Chic, Coat. Peacock Gardenia duvet cover set, Dunelm, would work here



**GUEST BEDROOM**
**Layers of creamy neutrals create a calming environment.** Vienna quilted satin bedspread in Champagne is similar, Dusk. Shell-back mink velvet dining chair in Cream, Picture Perfect Home, has this look

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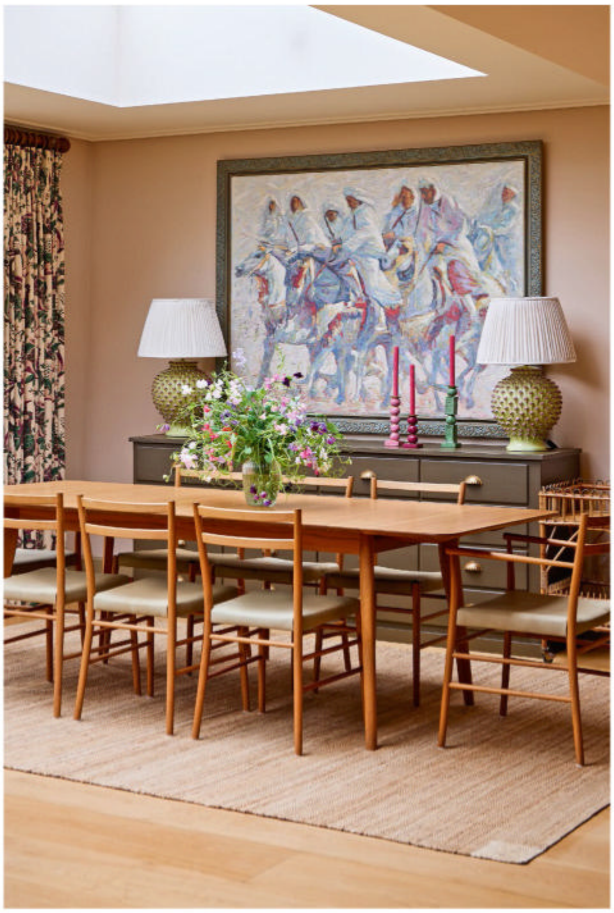
# LIFE IN COLOUR

*This 1980s home was yearning for vibrancy and Laura Stephens delivered that with the most beautiful palette*

**WORDS** RUTH CORBETT | **PHOTOGRAPHY** BOZ GAGOVSKI

**SITTING AREA**
**The existing sofas and chairs were reupholstered with a mix of striped and textured weave linens.**
Console table, Alfred Newall. Upholstery fabrics, Filling Spaces at Turnell & Gigon

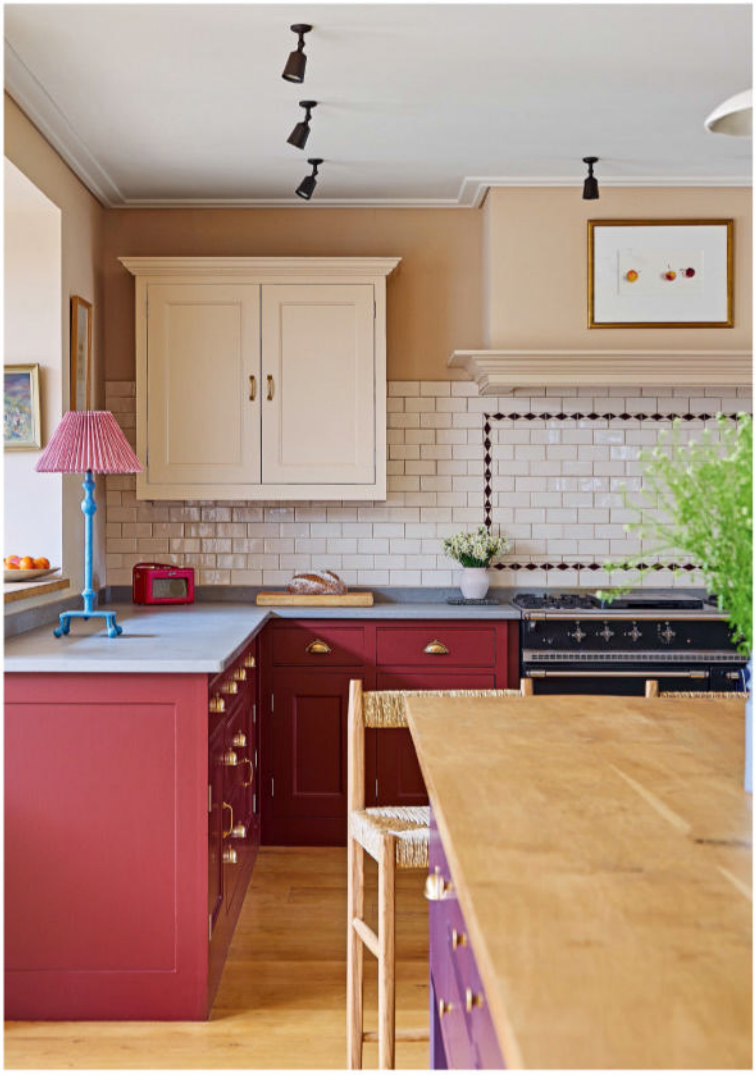


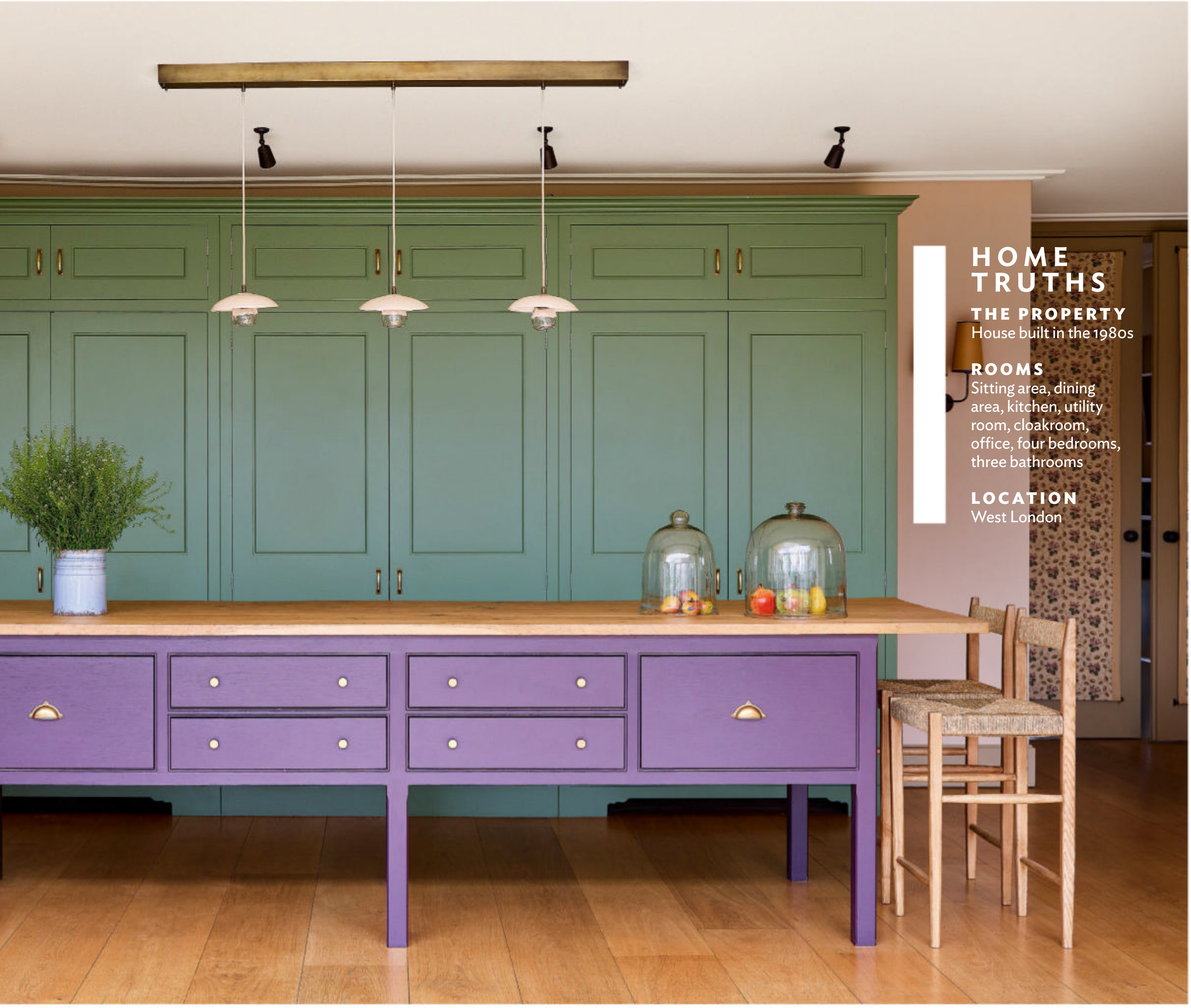
**DINING AREA**

**A huge skylight floods the space with natural light. The painting of running horses inspired the colour scheme.**
Green lamps, Studio HÁM. Dining table and chairs, Pinch. Artwork, homeowner's own

**KITCHEN**

**Purple, green and burgundy are unlikely bedfellows, but the similar intensities of their tones work incredibly well together.**
Cabinetry, Plain English. Pendant over island, Ochre. Stools, Zara Home. Wall tiles, Balineum





## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**
House built in the 1980s

**ROOMS**
Sitting area, dining area, kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, office, four bedrooms, three bathrooms

**LOCATION**
West London

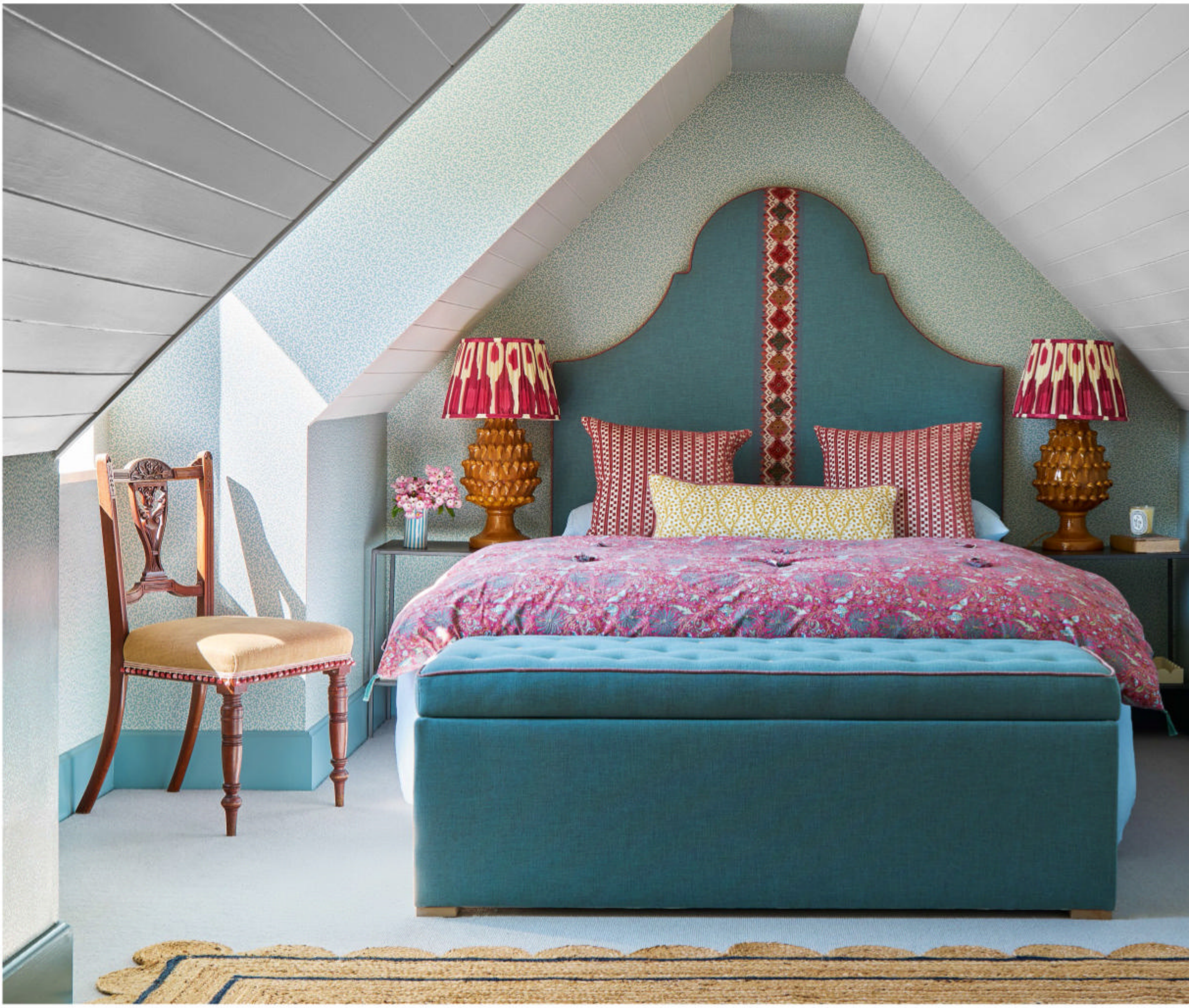
Colour does not add a pleasant quality to design – it reinforces it.' So said the French painter and lover of bold colour, Pierre Bonnard. It's a sentiment that would surely resonate with the owner of this home, as she considered its spacious, but somewhat characterless interior. Built in the 1980s, it had worn – bar the occasional pop of colour – an almost entirely grey scheme for years. 'Colour, pattern and flow were my client's priorities for her redesign,' says interior designer Laura Stephens. 'She was yearning for vibrancy.'

Having met through Instagram, Laura's client was drawn to her use of colour to create warmth, an element she felt was missing from the house at the time. 'Her children had left home and she was ready to give the place a revivify – one that would bring cohesion to her treasured furniture and art, while injecting bold hues, pattern and character into every room,' says Laura.

The house had good proportions, generous lateral space and an abundance of natural light. 'The ground floor is essentially open plan, with hallway, kitchen, dining and living spaces flowing into and out of each other,' says Laura. 'But it was all a bit muddled so we rejigged the layout and introduced some smart zoning to help demarcate the different areas more clearly.'

The most dramatic upgrade was to the kitchen, which dominates the space and needed to look attractive and to feel integrated with its surroundings. 'A Moroccan painting in the dining area was my starting point,' says Laura. 'It's full of lovely purples and pinks. We added a burgundy shade – just for the lower cabinets

**'LIGHTING WAS RETHOUGHT THROUGHOUT WITH SPOTLIGHTS REPLACED BY DIRECTIONAL LIGHTS, PENDANTS AND WALL LIGHTS'**



– to the existing green and purple cabinetry, replaced the handles for a more tactile experience and fitted a bespoke tiled splashback to bring depth and focus.' Laura's client was sceptical at first about the additional deep red colour, but ultimately trusted in her that all would be well. 'And it was!' says Laura.

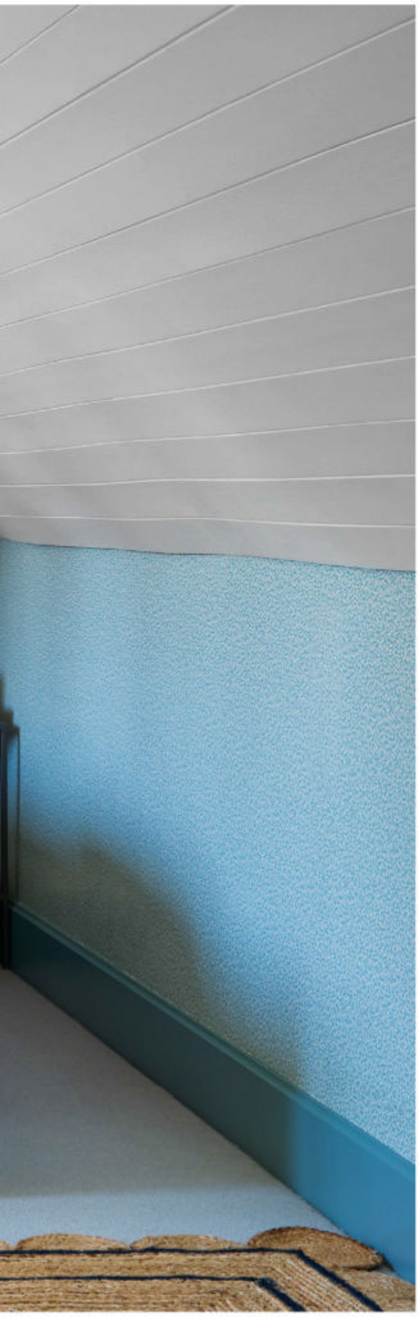
Upstairs, there is a spacious landing that has been painted a pinkish-leather shade, almost Mediterranean in feel. 'You don't generally get large landings in London houses, but that's one of the pluses of a more recently built home. Here, there was enough room for a beautiful armoire and a reupholstered antique chair to rub shoulders without the space ever feeling cramped.'

In the bedrooms and bathrooms, bold palettes were fully embraced and balanced with soft, tonal accents to ensure each room felt harmonious, yet full of individual personality. The main bedroom, tucked into the loft, was more of a challenge. Awkward because of its sloping ceiling, Laura's solution was to celebrate this, rather than try to disguise it. A shapely headboard replaced the existing low-level one, instantly dealing with the unattractive void above it, while creating an anchoring effect in the room. 'Immediately the proportions became just right,' Laura says.

Design details such as these, alongside considered layering and careful zoning, work to enhance the bones of a modern build, resulting in a home that feels deeply personal, richly textured and perfectly in tune with the family's evolving needs. ㉕

*laurastephens.co.uk*

**'BOLD PALETTES WERE EMBRACED AND BALANCED WITH SOFT, TONAL ACCENTS TO ENSURE EACH ROOM FELT HARMONIOUS'**



### MAIN BEDROOM

**The shapely headboard sits perfectly within the sloping proportions of the space.** Headboard, The Headboard Workshop, with Colefax and Fowler braid. Lamps, Agata Treasures

### EN SUITE

**This small room is located in the eaves and a cosseting feel was achieved by colour drenching it.** Walls and vanity in Oval Room Blue, Farrow & Ball. Handles on vanity, MG&Co. Mirror, Tooka

### BASEMENT

**A utility room, cloakroom and office in the lower ground floor connect via a formerly bland transitional space, now decorated with a gallery of animal artworks, striped rug and bold red lamps.** Lamp bases, Montes & Clark. Lamp shades, Birdie Fortescue. Tessa rug, Bombay Sprout x Laura Stephens

### LANDING

**The space is wide enough to accommodate a mix of furnishings easily.** Chair fabric, Inchyra. Green lamp base, Sarah Vanrenen. Lamp shade, Fermoie

# A KIND *of* MAGIC

As soon as they saw this Edwardian house, Katie and David Curtis knew it would be the perfect setting for Christmas

**WORDS** RACHEL LEEDHAM | **PHOTOGRAPHY** BRENT DARBY

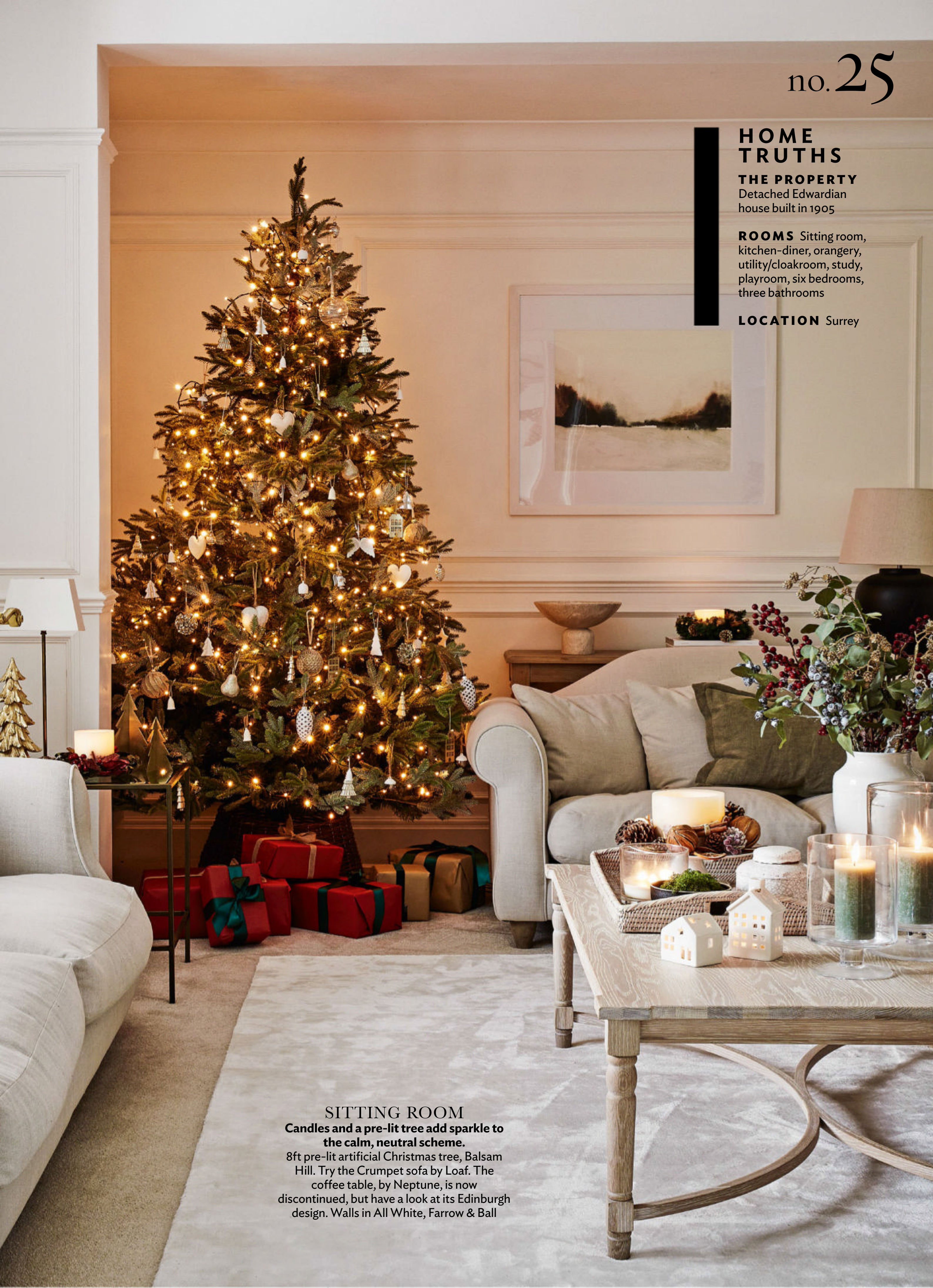
no. 25

## HOME TRUTHS

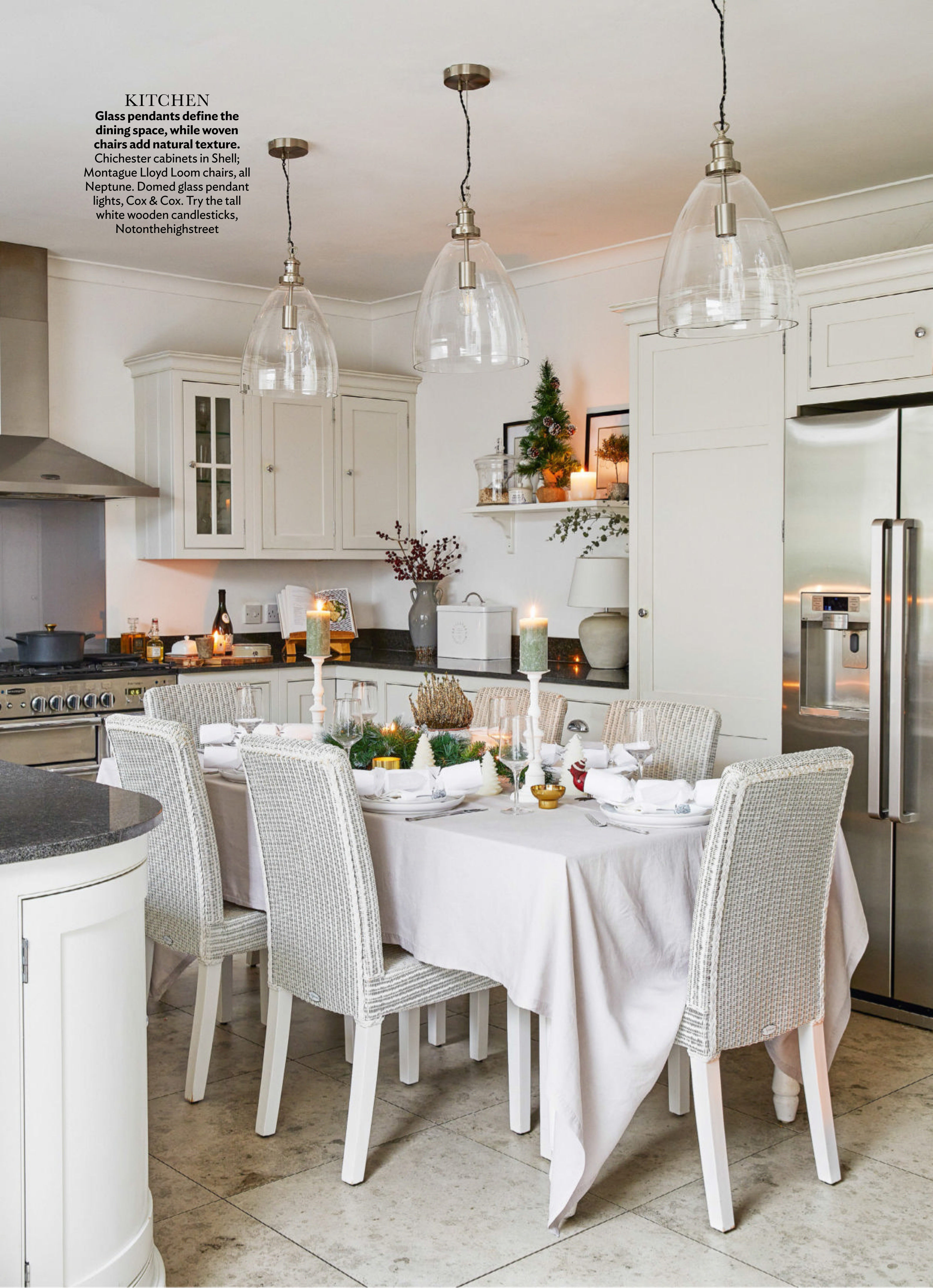
**THE PROPERTY** Detached Edwardian house built in 1905

**ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen-diner, orangery, utility/cloakroom, study, playroom, six bedrooms, three bathrooms

**LOCATION** Surrey



SITTING ROOM
**Candles and a pre-lit tree add sparkle to the calm, neutral scheme.** 8ft pre-lit artificial Christmas tree, Balsam Hill. Try the Crumpet sofa by Loaf. The coffee table, by Neptune, is now discontinued, but have a look at its Edinburgh design. Walls in All White, Farrow & Ball



KITCHEN

**Glass pendants define the dining space, while woven chairs add natural texture.** Chichester cabinets in Shell; Montague Lloyd Loom chairs, all Neptune. Domed glass pendant lights, Cox & Cox. Try the tall white wooden candlesticks, Notonthehighstreet

Christmas begins early in the Surrey home of Katie and David Curtis – mid-November, in fact. 'I get very carried away, I just love the build-up,' says Katie. The couple's three children – Freddie, eight, Finn, six and Lily, four – share her enthusiasm: 'They have their own tree, which they decorate with baubles from their grandparents and handmade treasures from nursery and school. It's not as curated as the other trees in the house, but it brings so much joy,' she says.

The family moved from London to their spacious, six-bedroom Edwardian house, situated in a small village in Surrey, six years ago. From the moment they stepped through the front door, Katie and David knew it was the perfect setting for family Christmases. 'You walk into a generous hallway and to the left there's the elegant sitting room with a large open fire. We could immediately imagine everyone gathered around it,' says Katie, who each year hosts both sets of parents as well as her brother and his family. 'Opposite the sitting room is a study with a projector and drop-down screen – it turns into our little festive cinema where we play Christmas films for the children.'

Though structurally sound, the house needed rewiring and replastering, leaving little in the budget for decorative finishes. Undeterred, Katie set about transforming the interiors herself. 'I just followed tutorials I found on YouTube,' she says, modestly. She added wall panelling to introduce character and chose a calm, off-white palette for the main living spaces, introducing rich, deep blue tones in the study and playroom for contrast. 'I originally painted the kitchen walls white, but a year later I repainted one in navy blue to bring in more warmth,' she adds.

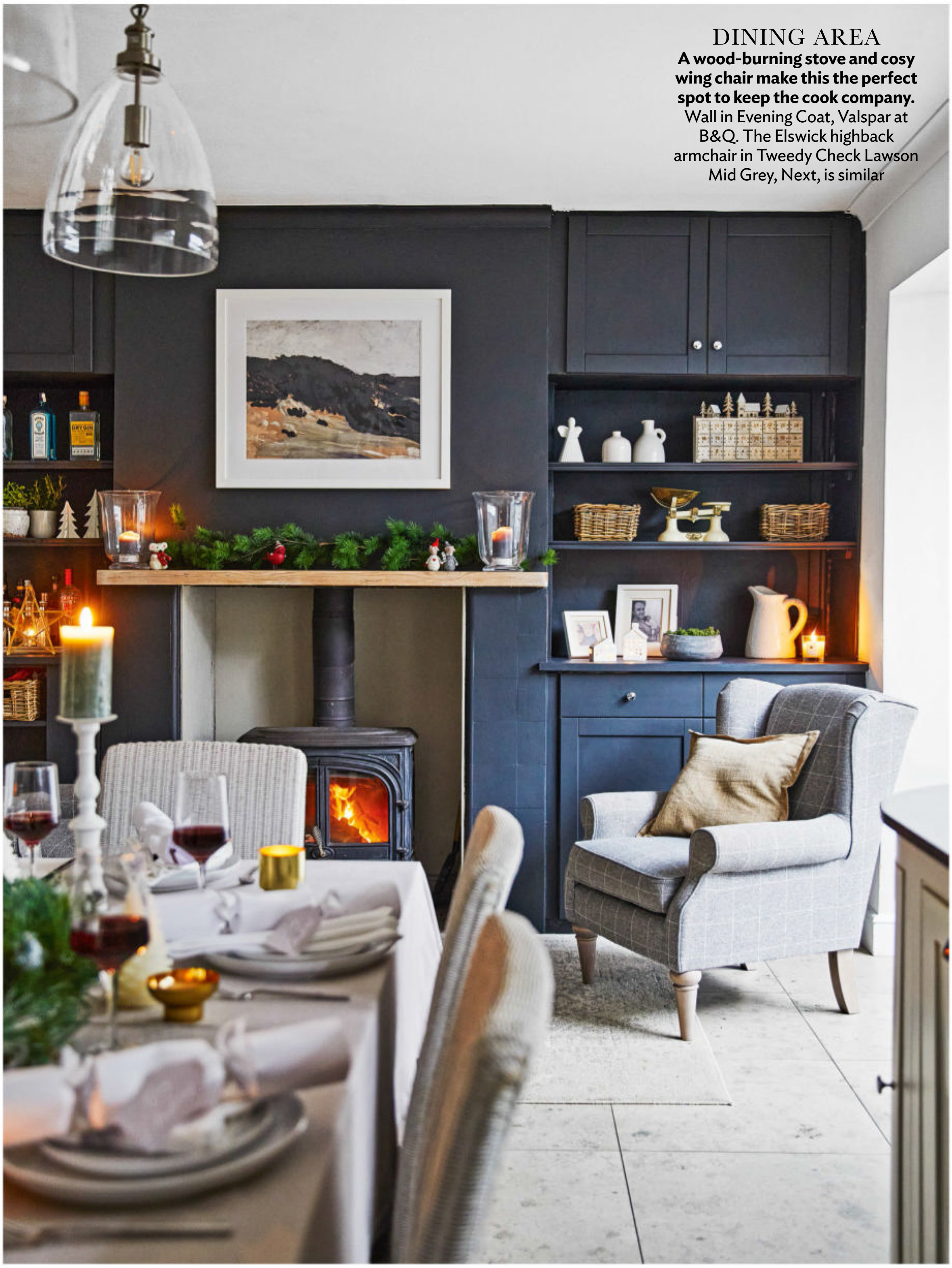
Katie's savvy sourcing gives the home its polished yet personal look – high-street finds are combined with outlet buys from her favourite brand Neptune, while prints purchased from online platforms such as Etsy were elevated with vintage frames to decorate the walls. The same thoughtful approach extends to her growing collection of Christmas decorations. 'I use artificial trees and bought a couple of really fantastic ones in the sale last June – they were still an investment, but the quality is amazing,' she notes.

To add extra magic to her festive displays, Katie layers in fairy lights, candles and generous amounts of foliage foraged from the garden. 'I'll buy an affordable garland and then weave in eucalyptus or olive branches. I usually refresh the greenery about four times over the season to keep everything looking good.'

While hosting at Christmas can be quite full-on, Katie's family shares the load: 'Each of us takes a day of catering, so we can relax the rest of the time. It makes it much more enjoyable – and means everyone gets to have some quality time,' she explains.

And this year, there is a brand new addition to the celebrations: Elvis, the family's Cavapoo puppy. 'I suspect the children will dress him up in some antlers or a tiny Christmas jumper,' says Katie. 'I think he's only going to add to the festive fun.'

‘I originally painted the kitchen walls white, but a year later I repainted one in navy to bring in more warmth’

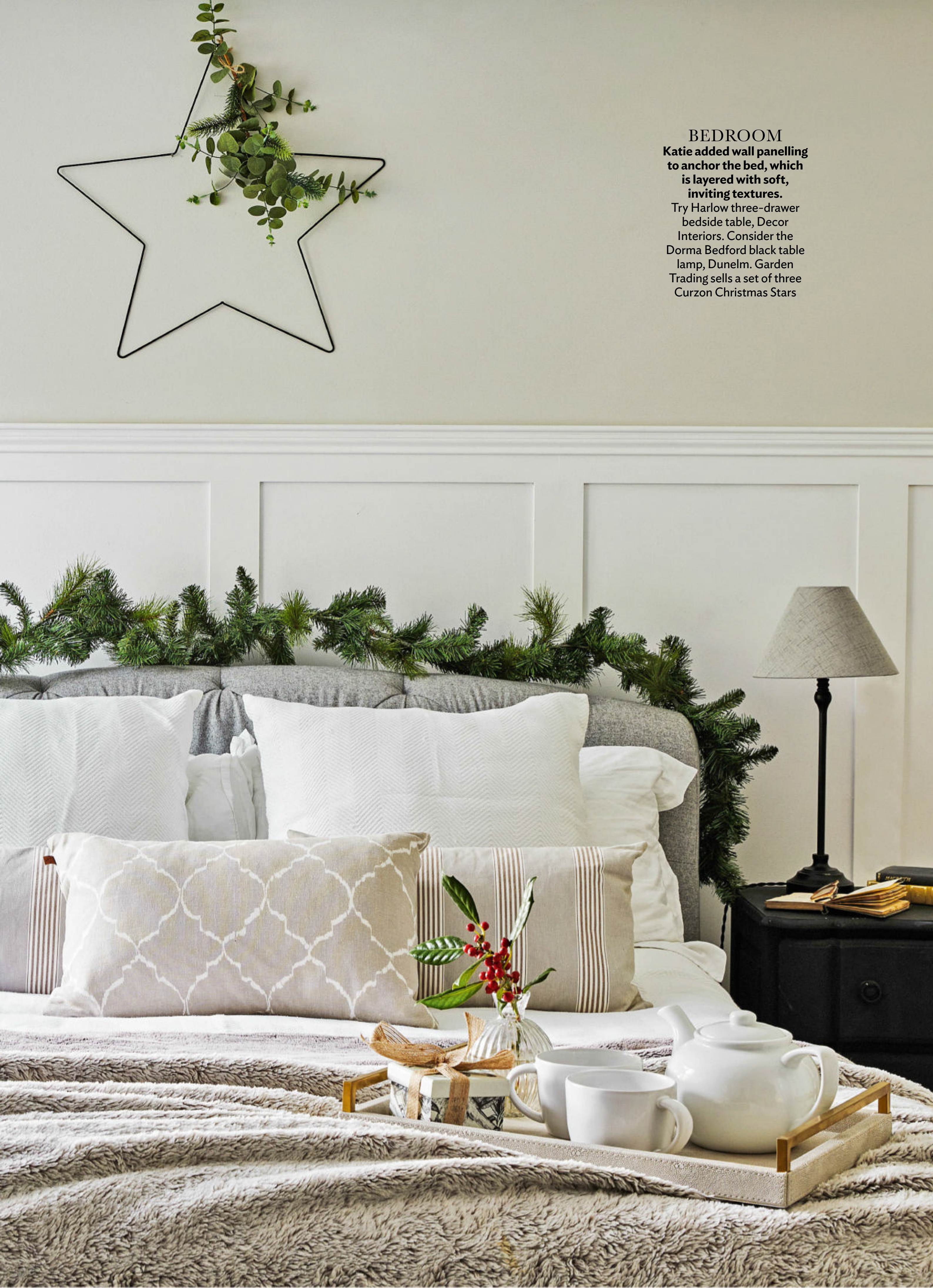


DINING AREA

**A wood-burning stove and cosy wing chair make this the perfect spot to keep the cook company.** Wall in Evening Coat, Valspar at B&Q. The Elswick highback armchair in Tweedy Check Lawson Mid Grey, Next, is similar

PLAYROOM

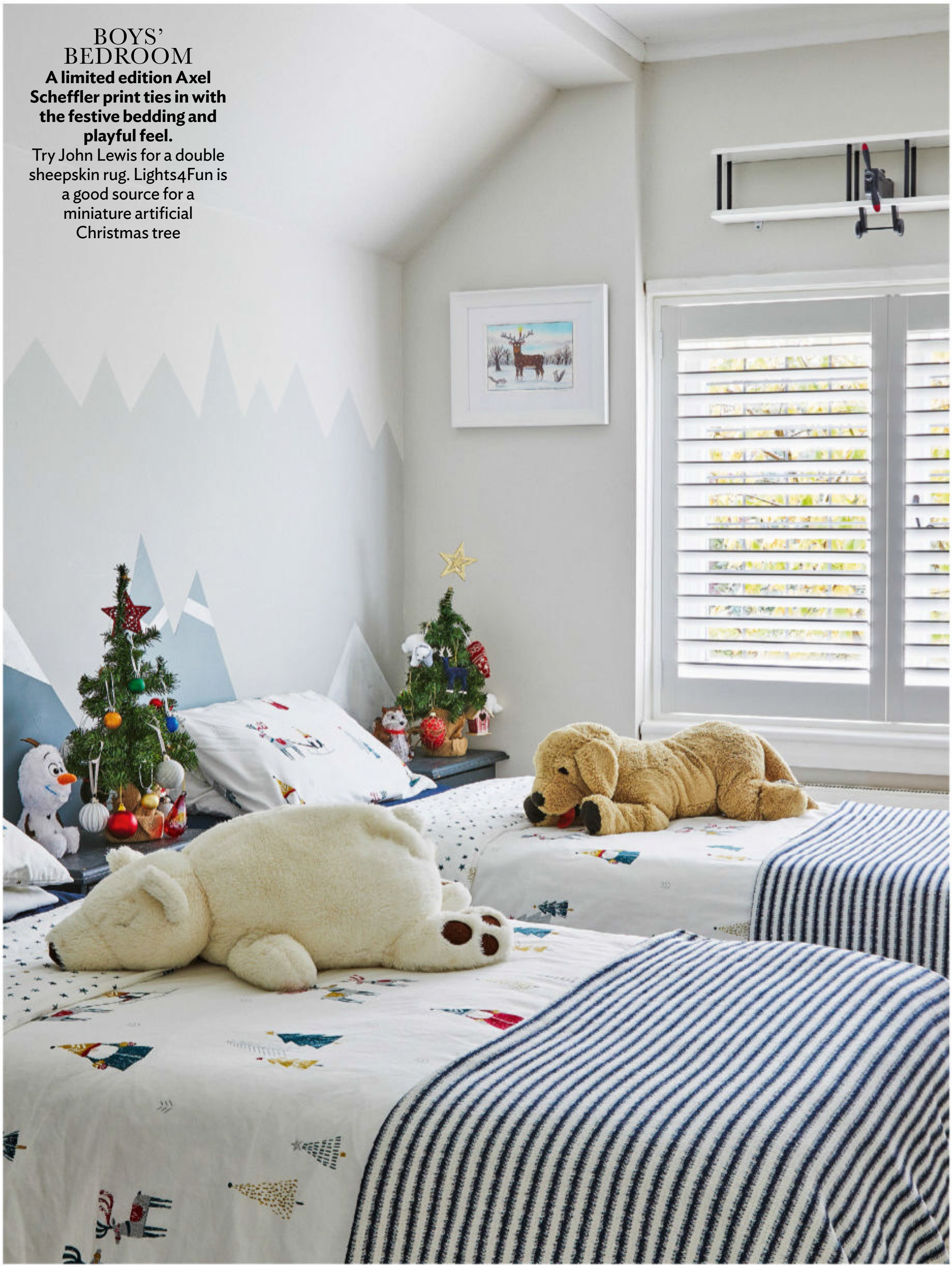
**The children's tree is trimmed with handmade decorations and baubles gifted over the years.** Walls in Stiffkey Blue, Farrow & Ball. Have a look at the kids' grey tepee tent, Benebomo



BEDROOM

**Katie added wall panelling to anchor the bed, which is layered with soft, inviting textures.** Try Harlow three-drawer bedside table, Decor Interiors. Consider the Dorma Bedford black table lamp, Dunelm. Garden Trading sells a set of three Curzon Christmas Stars

‘A mountain is quite a simple motif to do for a mural in a child’s room and it adds so much character’



BOYS’ BEDROOM

**A limited edition Axel Scheffler print ties in with the festive bedding and playful feel.**
Try John Lewis for a double sheepskin rug. Lights4Fun is a good source for a miniature artificial Christmas tree

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# STYLE *inspiration*

Replicate Katie's peaceful winter wonderland decor with a snowy palette, cosy touches and abundant greenery

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FEATURE HOLLY PHILLIPS

**1** Orlando glass schoolhouse pendant, £159, Industville **2** Faux-fur throw in Sourdough and Latte, £125, French Bedroom **3** Chasseur round casserole, £200, Dexam **4** Ceramic tea light houses, £24 (medium); £26.50 (tall), Charlotte's Shopping **5** Ultimate pre-lit fir tree centrepiece 180cm garland, £95, The White Company **6** Galbe coffee table, £682, La Maison Chic **7** Metal cut-out star with pine cones, £9.99, Gisela Graham **8** Ludchurch table lamp in Industrial Black with shade, £89, Laura Ashley at Där Lighting **9** Clementine Christmas crackers, £39 for six, Nancy & Betty **10** Teepee play tent in Platinum Grey, £74.99, Rucomfy **11** Aubusson Blue wall paint, £55.95 for 2.5ltr, Annie Sloan **12** Sherlock high-back armchair in Tweedy Check Lawson Mid Grey, £550, Next

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# DESIGN *solutions*

We've picked the best style inspiration, interior advice and takeaway ideas from the homes in this issue

## 1

### CURVED SEATING

Shapely seating adds elegance to a living area and can make it feel warm and inviting, as in this room designed by Philippa Thorp. Styles vary from rounded armchairs and simple curved sofas to sectional seating that comes in segments for different arrangements. If space is tight, this seating style can be a good choice, with its rounded lines giving a visual sense of fluidity and openness as well as being easier to manoeuvre around than sharp corners. Waldorf 2 corner 1.5 chaise sofa in Soft Sherpa Stone (above right), £2,299, Sofology.

## 2

### ISLAND STORAGE

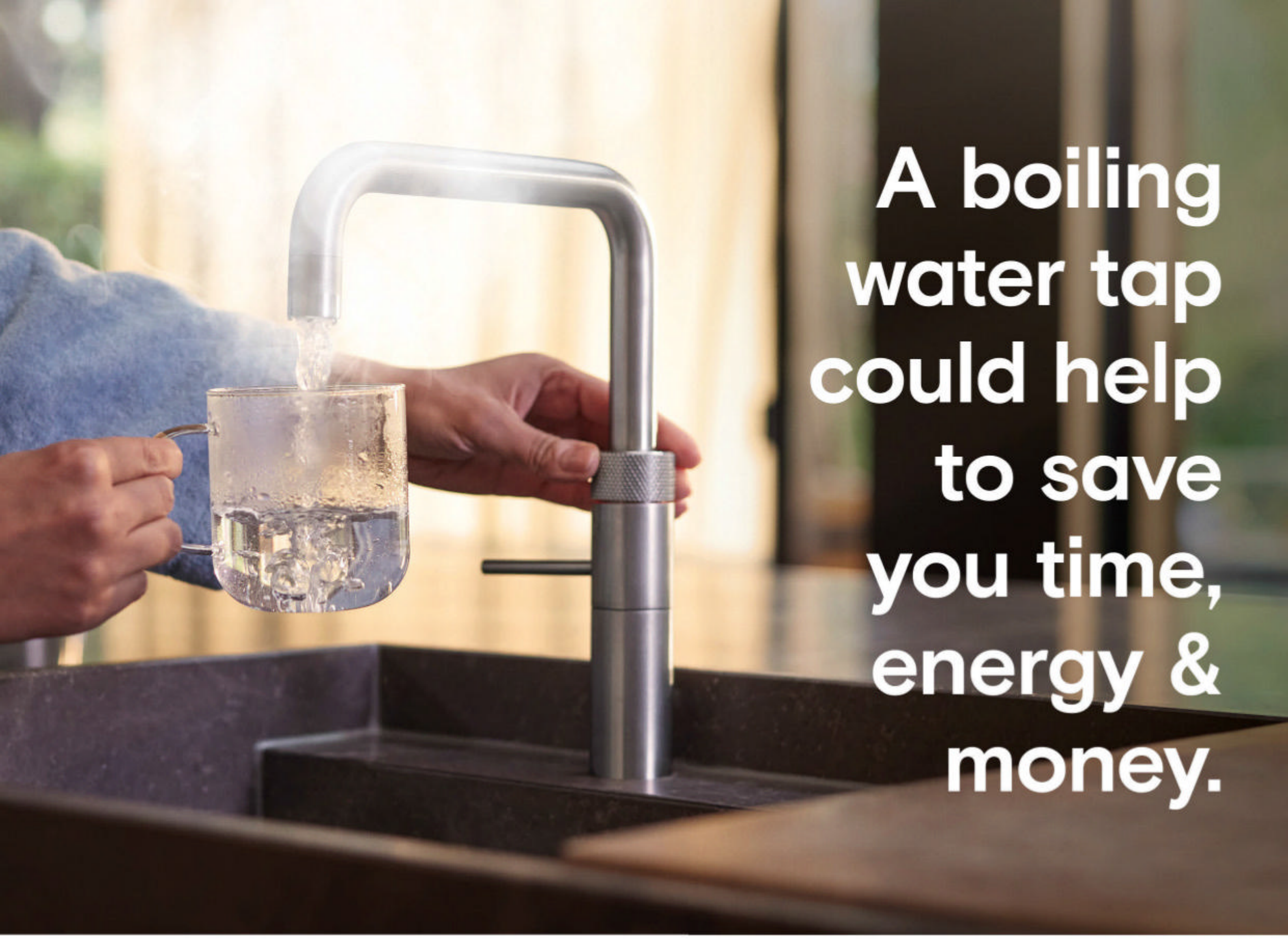
The kitchen-facing side of an island tends to be where most of the action happens, whether cooking, prep or washing-up, while the outward-facing side is viewed from the dining or living area, so lends itself to a more decorative treatment. Including open shelving, as Nina has done, will provide storage for kitchenware and cookbooks as well as a display area for crockery, glassware or ornaments. You could add a pop of colour by painting the back panel a cheery shade. Sunflower chalky matt (below), £59 for 2.5ltr, Morris & Co.

## 3

### STATEMENT WALLPAPER

A flamboyant wallpaper, like the chinoiserie that designer Lisa Frantz used in this hallway, will add instant impact as soon as you walk in. A little can go a long way with a bold design, so pairing an elaborate paper with a plainer area of wall or painted panelling can be a good way of tempering the effect to prevent it from overpowering. Choose a contrast paint colour to ensure a bold design really stands out or match the paint to the background colour of the wallpaper for a more muted, harmonious effect. Chinoiserie Neutral Bespoke mural wallpaper (left), from £40sq m, Graham & Brown.

**FEATURE** LISA FAZZANI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